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William Wright  
10 from his  
affectionate friend  
Alfred Haynes

October, 1906.

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THE MARCH OF MAN



THE  
MARCH OF MAN

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

ALFRED<sup>1</sup> HAYES

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1892

TO THE MEMORY OF  
JOSEPH PRIESTLEY

HE trod the lonely path of truth and light ;  
He saw, beyond the shadow of his land,  
A gallant people hold with single hand  
The world at bay, for liberty and right,  
And bade her speed. For this, while very night  
Blushed to behold, the brainless rabble-band,  
To please our bigot sires, with impious brand  
Devoured his home and drove him from their sight.  
Discloser of the secret of the wind,  
We, who repenting of that dastard flame  
Have learnt with late remorseful bays to bind  
Thy marble brow, our glory and our shame,  
Are twice partakers of our fathers' blame,  
If to strange lights we too are proud and blind.

BIRMINGHAM, 1891.





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# THE MARCH OF MAN

## CANTO I

BLIND—then a little light—and once more blind.  
Blind in birth's living shroud, there blindly reared,  
Thence blindly driven—and lo ! a drowsy babe,  
Its red face wrinkled like a fresh-blown poppy,  
Whose silken petals keep awhile the crease  
Of every fold they slept in. Day by day  
The light grows friendlier, till the strange great eyes,  
So vastly vacant, so profoundly grave,  
Stare hopeless, fearless, loveless at the world.  
Then dawn of soul and day of strength, then dusk  
Of fading dreams—a sigh—and once more blind.

From darkness unto darkness ; and this hour  
Of shattered lanterns and of naked lights  
Doth but the more reveal the enfolding gloom.  
What recked our brute forefathers of the cave ?  
They slew and ate, begat and slept ; to them  
Earth seemed not one stale cradle, one stale tomb,  
Floating untended through the boundless void ;  
The weakling's moan, the spoil of lust and rage  
To them brought no misgivings ; and we saints,  
We sinners, curbed and bridled into crime,  
Our tender souls self-tortured with remorse,  
Envy them oft their blameless guiltiness.

Death grins at birth, and birth makes mock of  
death ;

Death, birth, and death—O weary, weary round,  
If self were all !—to think it, is to droop,

To live it, is to die. Away with self !  
Not beasts of prey, but human hearts of love !  
Not claws of greed, but eager hands of help !  
Not civil foes, but comrades in one cause !  
Forward !—we cannot backward, if we would—  
Forward through law to righteous lawlessness !

The generations pass into the dark ;  
They fold themselves in silence, and are gone ;  
Their loves and hates, ambitions, wrongs and tears,  
Pangs of the body, puzzles of the brain,  
Vex them no more. In vain our men of light  
Dissect the living nerve, in vain our priests  
Plead with the God of old, in vain our seers  
Question the heart of mystery—the deep  
Gives back no answer, and the ghosts that thronged  
Faith's morning-twilight visit not her noon.

Noon? — rides the sun so high? — or lingers low  
Beyond the horizon, while we wisely take  
Marsh-lights for stars, and starlight for the prime?  
Those altars yet outface the storm, whereby  
The gaunt white-bearded prophet of our sires  
Stood, drenched with human gore; he doubted not  
His night was day; and we, who hail some few  
Pale streaks of morning, howsoever fair  
And fraught with promise, for the light of noon—  
That open glory of the sunlit heavens,  
That desert-dreamland moving as we move—  
Are blind as he, and children of his pride.

Yet Progress doth not halt, but holds her way,  
O'er dust of ancient wisdom, power and wealth  
O'er palaces whence kingly pomp hath fled,  
And temples where dishallowed gods lie low,

Heavenward. The soldier sinks, the host moves  
on ;

It marches o'er the dying and the dead,  
Tramples, but after worships ; for the fallen,  
Whose closing eyes through cloud of battle-smoke  
And mist of death beheld the promised land,  
Are foremost conquerors.

The march of man  
Lies through a mountain-region ; each life-path  
Leads o'er a mountain's brow from vale to vale.  
Some slumber in the vale of infancy ;  
Of such as climb, some choose the lower path  
And some the loftier ; some the storm-bolt slays,  
Some stumble o'er the precipice, and some  
Sink overtired and perish in the snow ;  
The loneliest victor of untrodden peaks

Descends at last into the vale of age,  
Weary and travel-worn ; and lays him down—  
With boys that wonder at the next white peak,  
Restless to climb—beside some placid pool,  
And dreams it doth not move. But on the heights  
Stands Manhood, firm, erect, alert, and tracks,  
Ere he too fall asleep upon the shore,  
The windings of the stream of Time, now seen,  
Now hidden, backward to its secret source,  
Forward to shining visions of the sea.

For Time is not a whirlpool, but a stream ;  
It hath its eddying cycles, cataracts,  
And quiet-gliding deeps, with here and there  
A backward current born of overhaste ;  
But the whole mass of waters onward bears  
Toward, who shall say what dream of golden peace,



Or, if our sadder moods forbode the truth,  
Toward silence, darkness and forgetfulness—  
What then? The world is young, and who would  
shrink

To play the man, though death indeed close all?  
We perish, but the victory lives on ;  
Our eyes grow dim, our hearts grow faint, the sword  
Shakes in our grasp ; we yield it to our sons,  
Bless, send them forth, and lay us down to die.  
Old age doth well to guide, restrain and warn,  
But youth is the true prophet ; the hot heart,  
The eager eye, the ecstasy of faith,  
The joy of daring—these have won the world ;  
And he that hath them, being old, is young.  
Children of light, arise !—the shadows flee,  
The daylight is at hand !

There was a noon  
When Rome's imperial eagle, poised aloft,  
O'erawed the savage West ; then darkness fell,  
And in that darkness greed and lust grew fat ;  
Children forgot to blush, women to weep ;  
Whole cities thronged to see men bleed for gold ;  
The rabble fawned, the noble tossed them bread ;  
The good and true chose death ; a pool of gore  
Reeked round the throne, and each bloat murderer  
That sat thereon was God.

Into the midst  
Of that foul gloom a lowly beam of light  
Stole from the East, and steeped in sacred blood  
Slowly prevailed and widened into day ;  
The breath of life swept through those fetid mists ;  
Christ's Vicar sat in Cæsar's seat, the slave

Leapt from his chains, the brothel-temples fell,  
Cathedrals rose to Heaven like prayers in stone,  
And kings paid court to holy men who wore  
The Master's crown of thorns, ate of the field,  
Drank of the brook, and preached in loving deed  
Good tidings to the poor.

Then once again

Fell darkness ; prelates clutched the sword and  
purse

Black with the ban of Christ, hid reason's star  
With smoke of reason's martyrs, turned the halls  
Of brethren bound in equal helpfulness  
To dens of harlots. They whose crippling toil  
Made sleek the lord, robbed of their wretched  
bread,

To swell his pomp, ate grass and lay like swine ;

For him the court, the dance, the chase, the feast,  
The rape of maiden brides ; for them the load  
Of hopeless days, the halter and the wheel.  
Dense was the night, and angry was the dawn ;  
Fierce smote the day-star reason on the pride  
Of Pope and King ;—it melted like the rime,  
And thought took wing once more.

Then glared a noon  
Of terror, and the death-light of eclipse ;  
And in that lurid gloom a nation strove  
Single against the world, and all the Earth  
Was shaken with the thunder of the strife.  
The would-be Cæsar fell, and night returned  
Haunted with echoes of old ruins fallen  
And fitful levin of the people's wrath.  
The promise of that dawn, "No more of chains !

Brothers and equals all ! ” was born in blood ;  
Blood ruled the day, and blood defiles the night ;  
For in this lingering night, while louder swells  
The shout of revel and the roar of toil,  
While wail and threat of misery disturb  
The rich man’s peace, and idle palaces  
Forbode the earthquake, while the nations groan  
Under their weight of armour—fools and knaves !  
We trample happiness, to clutch at gold  
Wrung from the slow starvation of the poor,  
Profess the Christ, and plead the plea of Cain,  
“ Each brother for himself.”

Night lingers yet ;

But darker hours have passed, and even now  
Faintly, but widely, glimmers the new dawn.  
We shall not see its glory, we who strive

Sad-hearted in the spectral twilight, sick  
With long soul-hunger, weary to behold  
Greed seize his shivering prey, and in his web  
Mammon the subtle spider lurk, his paunch  
Swoll'n with the blood of bright and wingéd things.  
We shall not see the glittering halls of guile  
Totter, the homes of honest toil grow fair,  
The couch of selfish sloth become a bed  
Of loathing, and the labourer rise and shake  
The vampire off that sucks his weary veins ;  
We shall not breathe the loftier purer air  
Of civic life, each emulous for all,  
And all for each, when none need strain or starve  
That some may surfeit, none be vilely clad  
That some may blaze with jewels, none be choked  
With highway dust that some may lightly toy  
In flowery glades of sweet unfruitfulness ;

When cities shall no more screen dens of slaves  
With bowers of indolence ; but stately halls  
Of Art and Truth shall rise 'mid beauteous homes  
Of brethren banded for the common good,  
Faithful in toil and just in recompense,  
Simple of life and strenuous of soul,  
Through union strong and free through self-  
restraint,  
A wiser, nobler, lovelier race than ours.

It dawns, but ah ! how slowly ! and what clouds  
Of sloth and hate, of dullness, pride and greed,  
Obscure it from our sight !—Yet see ! the hills  
Are crowned with splendour, and the wistful eyes  
Of them that watch thereon are full of fire  
  
Children of light, arise !—the shadows flee,

The daylight is at hand !—fulfil your dreams ;  
Up to the hills and view the growing dawn !  
Your dreams have given it birth ; see that it live ;  
For ye are guardians of the day, its glow  
Springs from your hearts, defenders of the faith,  
Bright champions of the noble, just and true !  
Cry to the poor, “ Ye shall not always pine  
In darkness, cold and hunger, while life’s feast  
O’erflows for them who make their heaven your  
hell ! ”

Cry to the drudge, “ Thou shalt not always rest  
The thing of scorn thy lord hath held thee, slow,  
Long-suffering, hard and stubborn as an ass,  
Stunted in soul and brutal in desire,  
Ill-fed, ill-housed, coarse-featured and coarse-  
tongued.”

Cry to their lords, “ Ye have betrayed your trust,



Put to base use your basely-gotten gains,  
Have lured the blind astray, enslaved the weak,  
And given their bread to rascals ; ye were called  
To lead the world in loftier ways of life,  
And ye have served your bellies and become  
A byword and a blot ; your days are told.”  
Cry to the bountiful, “ Your wheat was sown  
’Mid tares ; one sickle reapeth all ; fear not ;  
The harvest will divide the tares and wheat ;  
Blame not the reaper’s hand ; so suffered Christ.”  
Cry to the stubborn, “ Tremble for your sons !  
On them you lay the burden of your debt ;  
They shall redeem it ; flatter not your pride ;  
Redress is sure ; only with you it lies  
Whether it come of reason or of wrath.”  
Cry to your loitering brothers, “ Up ! and join  
Our slender band, one day to be a host ! ”

Take sword and shield ; the powers of night are  
strong,

The battle will be long and bitter ; sound  
The clarion of your faith, " Christ lives, no more  
In shrines of stone, but in the hearts of men !"  
The wiser poor, the kindlier rich, will hear  
Your summons gladly ; and the wavering throng,  
Catching amid a thousand doubtful cries  
One clear firm trumpet-call, at last will seek  
Your standard, and the victory will be yours.

Sound an alarm ! for many a waking soul  
Listens, while comfortable captains drone :—  
" Loud fools, that think to fashion gods of clay,  
Let be ! ye vex yourselves in vain : the dawn  
Asks not your aid ; ye cannot stay its course  
Nor hasten it one hour."—Regard them not ;

Prophets of ease, ambassadors of sloth,  
Seducers of the soldiery of Heaven !  
They spake not thus, whose voices echo yet  
Across oblivion's widening domain,  
Those mighty marshals of the wars of old.  
Man's spacious evolutions on this world's  
Dim battlefield, where night contends with day,  
Spare not a soldier ; each one doth his part  
To make or mar the triumph, and he thwarts  
Who helps not. None can watch the shifting  
lines,  
The headlong rout, the struggling hero-band,  
The heights now gained, now lost, 'mid curse and  
prayer,  
Wail of the wounded, silence of the slain,  
Himself unmoved, save Him who moveth all.  
Love's kingdom is not won by watching ; Heaven

Is slowly scaled by toil and tears and blood ;  
The bonds that man hath woven man must rend,  
The wrongs that man hath suffered man must  
    right,  
The hopes that man hath wrecked man must  
    restore,  
Man's nobler order man himself must found.  
What though in bygone æons some vast power,  
We darkly name by the great name of God,  
Scattered the seed of systems through the void,  
Spake to them, "Thus and thus ye shall unfold,"  
And left them self-sufficient but foredoomed  
To one fixed course?—the destinies of man  
Revolve not as the planets round the sun,  
Move not to music of some distant sphere,  
But answer man's own impulse, and are ruled  
By human passion, pity, faith and love.

The goal we cannot choose but reach, is seen  
By human hope and sought by human strength ;  
The laws we cannot choose but own, are writ  
In human hearts, proclaimed by human wills ;  
Fate's active servants, not her passive slaves.  
What though, engendered in Time's secret womb,  
The germ of all that man shall ever be  
Was quickened by the Maker and ordained  
To see the light with labour and with groans ?—  
Yet knowledge can assuage the pangs, and skill  
Hasten the joyful birth. What though the world  
Untimely suffer many a spasm which fails  
And brings forth nought but sorrow ?—every throe  
Hath yet its purpose, and unknown prepares  
The agony which yields the newborn life.  
  
The old world lieth quiet in its grave ;

Castle and abbey crumble, gently falls  
Decay's gray breath upon them, and the ivy  
Stealeth a silent triumph o'er their death ;  
The new world striveth blindly to be born ;  
The dungeon-bars are sundered, but the dens  
Where hirelings sweat dishonour frame and soul ;  
The chains of steel are snapt, but weaker slaves  
Groan under stronger lords in chains of gold ;  
The lance hath rusted, but the arm of wealth  
Wields mightier weapons, hunger, cold and shame ;  
The Wonder-god departeth, but the faith  
That drave him forth hath fled the minster-walls  
And wanders outcast, homeless and forlorn ;  
So, when nis pity of the bruised and poor,  
His wrath against the proud, had won for Christ  
A felon's doom, the warders of his truth  
Spake not in temples rich with carven stone,

With incense dim, and hallowed by the prayers  
Of ages, but proclaimed from meagre rooms  
The gospel that availed to cleanse the world ;  
It hath its temples now ; the faith to come  
Shall dwell therein when wider day prevails,  
A thousand dawn-hues blending in one light ;  
And who shall say, when that bright dawn is seen  
As darkness, what transcendent noon of faith,  
Pure, open, boundless as the blue of heaven  
The future shall disclose ?

The nations writhe

In travail, and a smothered moan is heard  
That shall become a mighty cry and shake  
Men's hearts with joy and horror of the birth.  
Slow is the labour, for the birth is great ;  
Bitter the pangs and sick with baffled hope.

A hundred years have pondered on the throes  
Of her whose haste proved hindrance, when the  
torch

That Luther held to heaven, and Cromwell  
snatched

To kindle a great people's zeal, inflamed  
A stormier neighbour, and the right of self,  
Unchained at last, amazed to feel its strength,  
Turned freedom into frenzy, and so wrought  
New shackles of the old. A score of years  
Unpondering have trampled on the sod  
Where sleep the soldier-craftsmen of the Seine,  
Untimely bold, whose battle-cry was yet  
The watchword of the future—"All for All."

Slow is the travail, and no child of ours  
Shall greet the newborn day ; he shall but see



The bosom of the nations heaving hard,  
Perchance some fierce convulsion that shall make  
All Christendom turn pale and gasp for breath,  
While year by year the rich shall grow more soft,  
The poor more stern, the strife for gain more wild,  
More hopeless ; wealth shall league with wealth,  
and want

Shall league with want, till that strange hour ascend,  
When one shall hold within a trembling palm  
The substance of ten thousand marshalled slaves,  
Each wiser, trustier, manlier than himself.

Slow is the travail, but the birth is sure ;  
Resistless forces muster ; myriads aid  
The great deliverance, neither knowing it  
Nor willing ; the rash strife of selfish aims  
Hath served to bind men closer, and beneath

The tribulation of this pregnant age  
Is felt the throbbing of a nobler heart.  
The birth is sure.

The pilgrimage of man

Is toward his godhead ; long the way and steep ;  
And gazing on the heights that tower before  
He well may droop, but gazing on the plain  
Where once he trod, take heart. The World to  
Come,  
The Fellowship of Toil, the League of Right,  
The Reign of Love, the Commonwealth of Peace,  
Could scarce seem stranger to our eyes, than we  
To the wild naked race from whom we sprang.  
Man that shall be half-god was once half-beast ;  
He ate his kind, he pierced the withered womb  
That bare him, flayed his foe and grinned to mark

His dying torment. How might such as he  
Forebode an age to come, when man should spin  
Rock into less than gossamer, weigh the stars,  
Bridle the lightning, wield the thunderbolt,  
And bind a girdle round the loins of Earth ;  
While Art should lift and Faith should fire the  
soul,  
And gentle hands should wait upon the sick,  
And all the tender charities of home  
Hallow man's life ? Brutish and slow and few  
His purblind promptings ; yet a root so base  
Hath borne at last such blossom ; and shall we  
Who wear it, and who know the savage soil  
That nursed it, wring our hands because its thorns  
Are strong and cruel, crying, " Alas ! in vain  
The warmer sun, the kindlier air ; in vain  
We vex our richer clay ; the seed we sow

Will spring no quicklier than the seed of old,  
Will yield no fairer flowers than these we pluck  
With disenchanted hearts and bleeding hands?"

None may peruse the book of things to be ;  
But we, before whose eyes the fading Past  
Lies like an open scroll, may well divine,  
Reading the breathing records of our day,  
Some phrases of the page our sons shall write,  
Cancelled, confused, o'erwrit, its fairest words  
Blotted and blurred perchance with tears and  
blood,

Yet bright with hope, and everywhere inscribed  
The watchword of the future, "All for All."

Man hath misused the powers a god might boast,  
Hath turned the ties of helpfulness to chains,

And lord of wind and wave and fruitful field  
Is slave of greed, till now, ten thousand years  
Of conflict overpast, his millions dwell  
Less sweetly than the bird that year by year  
Sings as he builds amid the budding thorn.  
Ages of bitter penance must redeem  
His long transgressions and instruct him late  
To use his gifts aright ; blood yet may flow  
In freedom's cause, as ofttimes blood hath flowed,  
But blood will ne'er cement with lasting strength  
The stronghold of our peace ; it will not stand,  
Till conscience-struck the rich at last renounce  
Their deathful privilege of sloth and waste,  
The poor awake from stupor, and the light  
Of conscious power and hope illume their souls.  
Then shall its broad foundations rest on faith,  
Love shall combine its parts, and justice rear

Its pillars, and all hands shall gladly join  
To stablish and adorn the home of all.

Brothers in toil and triumph ye shall be,  
Bright children of the future ! nevermore  
Hungry to plough that gluttony may reap,  
Naked to weave that vanity may wear,  
Homeless to build that idleness may lounge ;  
No more to wallow in the mire that some  
May dally in the meadows ; nevermore  
To stint the heart and starve the brain, that some,  
Your ceaseless sweat sustains, may mock your  
prayers,  
Sneering, "The swine would have us cast them  
pearls  
To trample."—Courage, friends !—beneath the  
froth

Of light and glittering wavelets, backward tossed  
By fashion's puffs, one all-embracing tide,  
Mighty as truth and deep as righteousness,  
Holds, inch by inch, its unrelenting way.

Lo ! how its sway advanceth ! Wave on wave,  
Steady and buoyant with unfathomed depth,  
Hath rolled across the leagues of heaving grey,  
Hath risen and reeled and fallen, and seething  
dashed

The rattling shingle up the shore, sucked back  
Only to speed the further.

Many a year  
That flood hath rolled since when the German sage,  
His grave eyes warm with pity of the poor,  
Watched the yet ebbing tide, and them that left  
Their cabins 'neath the cliffs to pitch, with slow

And bitter toil, beneath the lash of want,  
Pavilions on the sand, where Ease might sport  
Softly secure. He watched and groaned and  
spake ;—

“ Weak thralls that toil, strong lords that rob and  
waste,

It will not be for long ; the tide will turn,  
And slowly flowing swallow with its surge  
Palace and hut alike that rest on sand ;  
And naught shall last which human hands have  
reared,

Till Justice build her temple on the rock.”

So spake the seer ; men stopped their ears and  
scoffed ;

But in these latter hours, while deep the dust  
Lies in his grave, along the wide world's marge,  
Distant and low, is heard the approaching roar



Of overwhelming waves, till myriads now  
Unstop their ears, and harkening, some with fear  
And some with hope, confess the prophet's truth.

Swiftly for many an age portentous powers  
Have leapt from darkness, urging unaware  
The tide of toil's redemption ; for the wretch  
Who wandered naked, couched him with the wolf,  
And slew his sons to glut the fiend of storm,  
Now speeds through mountains, cleaves the hurri-  
cane,

And speaks across the ocean ; while his soul  
Mounts ever higher ;—no longer brutes that snatch  
Their solitary prey, but kindred wills  
Combining widely for a common good ;  
No longer slaves, branded and bowed and blind,  
Of lords that live by plunder of the poor,

But freemen marshalled close and firm, to claim  
Through majesty of labour's calm revolt  
Salvation for their fellows, space to breathe,  
Light to rejoice in, time to muse and feel,  
And not by never-slackened strain to prove  
Unwilling thieves of one another's bread ;  
Salvation for their masters, wholesome due  
Of daily toil, sound brain and honest heart,  
And not with jockey, drink and drab to spill  
The sacred gold which is the blood of men.

Over the troubled waters of the world  
Broodeth a newborn spirit, that shall calm  
Their self-destructive conflict and call forth  
Order again from chaos. Far and wide  
Resounds the cry,—“ Enough of self's mad fight,  
Enough of blaring each his brazen lie,

Of hewing at our brethren in the dark,  
Of trampling on our allies in the rush ;  
Let us be friends, and working with one will  
Possess the earth whereon we now but bleed !”

So rings the cry ;—and what though many a  
soul,

Untouched by passion for the public weal,  
Swell it through guile or fearfulness or greed,  
Nursing some narrow end ? What though the  
crowd,

Unmindful of the cause that is mankind’s,  
Bleat but as sheep that hear their flock-mates  
bleat ?—

’Twas ever thus ; the good cause basely served  
Is good no less ; the oak-tree thriveth not  
By shower and sun alone, but by the blasts

That shake its heart, and by the rotten mould  
Of its own leaves that falling feed its strength.

The temple of the future hath its base  
Deep in the past ; the master-builder, Time,  
Slow to upraise from naked wandering wights  
The tribe that owned one sire, from tribes the town,  
From towns the nation, and from these the race,  
Will found at last the Fellowship of Man.  
Shame on all hearts that feel, all souls that think,  
And hold this rich estate of life in trust,  
If careless of the increase yet to be,  
Forgetful of the increase that hath been,  
'They idly eat of others' toil and so  
Renounce their stewardship ! Shame on all eyes  
That read the record of man's uphill march  
Heavenward, from when he ate his kinsman's flesh

Till when his spirit soared in flights of song,  
Surveyed the pathways of the stars and curbed  
The lightning for his courier—shame, if we,  
Who enter on such lordly heritage  
Of act and hope, fold idle arms and whine,  
“The world stands still ; the wrongs our brethren  
    bear  
Are cureless as old age ; the crushing loads  
We bind upon the shoulders of the weak,  
The helpless girls on whom we wreak our lust,  
The little ones that starve to swell our feasts,  
Loud hawking of false wares, perpetual toll  
To him who toileth not from him who toils,  
The mill-horse round from dusk to dusk, till  
    heart  
Shrinks, and the soul stagnates, and the brain  
    throbs

To the engine's pulse, and man becomes machine,  
The itch of greed, the haggard overstrain,  
The senseless rivalry of costly show,  
Stupor of ignorance and sloth and want,  
Fever of gaming, harlotry and drink—  
These things are everlasting ; man hath learnt  
By sore experience much ; but never hope,  
Fond dreamer, men will learn to cast the slough  
Of selfishness, or steadfastly to lead  
Righteous and watchful lives, or toil to enrich  
The common treasure-house and win for each  
His portion at the banquet spread for all."

Shame on the faithless ones who thus disown  
The promise of the past ! The goal indeed  
Is distant ; many an age must bleed and sob  
In greed's unthrifty fray, ere wisdom's light,

So faint and fitful yet, illumine the world,  
And men be schooled to help where now they hate.  
The goal is distant, and the straining limbs  
Of them whose eyes descry the promised land  
Will never rest within it ;—but the hope,  
The striving, dies not with their dust ; they send  
Their sons afield, lithe limbs and eyes of fire,  
Sound brains and hearts of sunshine, and they cry,  
“ God speed the young ! they start from where we  
    sink ;  
Bravely they run the race wherein we faint ;  
Their breasts are heaving with our hopes, their feet  
Fledged with our conquests ; and when age hath  
    warped  
Their thews and chilled their veins, and when their  
    eyes  
Swim, straining at the future, from behind

They'll hear the rush of feet, and as they fall  
Gasp with their latest breath, 'God speed the  
young !' "

Yet ponder, ye who dream the reign of love,  
The coming Christ and Kingdom of his peace,  
Are nigh ; Justice must first prepare the way,  
Or Love will trip ; and Justice tarries long.  
Dulled with the long day's fight for meat and  
drink,

The crowd are but as babes, that heed alone  
The wrong that pincheth their own flesh, the  
fear

That knocketh at their own barred gate by night ;  
Let lust and greed and malice wreak their worst,  
Let war and waste devour the garnered grain,  
Oppression stalk unchallenged, fraud grow fat,



Perish the sun, moon, stars, yea ! perish God,  
If but their cushioned cradle rock secure.

Such are the crowd ; howbeit the human bond  
Was ne'er so strong and ample, nor the lie  
Of Cain's lean creed so blank. From land to land  
Speeds lightning-winged each nation's joy and woe,  
A million brains quick with the selfsame thought,  
A million hearts hot with the selfsame hope,  
One mind, one soul, one purpose, and one law.  
The wide world trembles in her strength, aware  
Of some great doom impending ; the old cry  
Of " King or People " faileth, the new cry  
Riseth of " Rich or Poor " ; the slaves that tax  
Sinew and brain to feast an idle few,  
Bound in one league of patient self-control,  
Strong with the meat of wisdom slowly won,

Bold with the wine of righteous discontent,  
Will one day hold of Mammon's stewardship  
A searching audit ; slowly will redeem  
The monstrous debt which centuries of wrong  
Have heaped upon the poor, or with one stroke  
Cancel it evermore ; will wisely change  
By just degrees the fashion of the scheme  
Of human toil and recompense, or stung  
By misery and maddened by disdain  
Shatter it with a blow—The rich may choose.

No more the father of the church constrains  
The pride of wealth, the rage of lust ; no more  
The priest, once champion of the people, curbs  
The gilded tyrant ; and no power stands forth  
To play the umpire in the fierce free fight  
For gain, and summon with controlling word

The struggling throngs to order ; and no faith  
Of all men held inspires, no hope of Heaven  
Gladdens the heart of misery. The faith  
That fired all France, and glowed through half the  
world,

A hundred years gone by, was strong to shake  
Old fabrics, but it founded not the new ;  
Madly it flung the rusty forms of life,  
Sceptre and crest and crosier, into scorn's  
Fierce melting-pot, but the fresh shapes are yet  
Uncast, and slowly must the metal cool  
In firmer moulds of thought, ere once again  
Order and faith prevail. Liege-lord and serf  
Have yielded place in gain's ungoverned strife  
To millionaire and hireling, every man  
A law unto himself ; these too shall yield,  
By slow advance of firmly-planted steps,

To common labour for the common weal,  
Rich store and right award of honest wares,  
To common learning for the common good,  
To faith and hope and care of humankind,  
To larger aims and broader ways of life,  
Till "Each for Self" shall yield to "All for All."

A hundred years gone by, from shore to shore  
The Western deep resounded with the clang  
Of sundered chains ; Britannia's eldest-born,  
The sturdy babe delivered from her loins  
In pangs of persecution and despair,  
Grown to a giant, cast indignantly  
The leading-strings aside that vexed its strength,  
And shouted "Freedom !"—France caught up the  
cry,  
And gave it tenfold breath, proclaimed for naught

The chance of birth, the pride of place, and drew  
With fiery hand, and held to all the world,  
The charter of her faith, the Rights of Man.  
Kings trembled, nobles quaked, and priests turned  
pale ;

The powers of darkness gathered ; host on host  
The thunder-clouds of battle rolled their gloom  
Toward that strange light, and like the levin's flash  
The sword of France leapt forth. Then gyves,  
that long

Had galled and rusted, fell ; prelate and lord  
Fled naked ; thought and deed, till then held in  
By rotten reins, burst them and rioted  
Stark mad ; and ere that lurid sun went down  
In reek of luxury, the wakened world  
Had welcomed a new gospel, " Off with chains !  
Free fight on a fair field, and devil take

The vanquished !”—Good ! so that the field be fair,  
So that the combatants be justly matched ;  
Good !—and we bless the day that gave the West  
A spur so sharp ; good !—but a better waits.  
What comfort to the millions who must sell  
Their toil for aught the hour affords, or starve,  
The chapman standing by with tongue in cheek  
Watching the teeming strife which works him  
wealth—

What comfort that we dub the bargain free ?  
Free as the brigand choice, “Your gold or life,”  
Free as the hounding of a naked horde  
By armed battalions. Little need to-day,  
Whate’er our grandsires’ need, to preach the faith  
Of selfish claims ; the nobler faith be ours  
Of civic duty, and the steadfast hope  
Of that good time when none shall gloat o’er gain

Wrung from the helpless, but each man's desire  
Shall be the public weal, and all shall dwell  
In healthfulness of mutual toil and rest.

Yet thank we gallant France, who singly bore  
The onset of the tyrants, leagued to quench  
The torch she held aloft to light the earth.  
Forgotten be her sins—mitre and crown  
Provoked them, and the red-cap's rapid axe  
Dealt gentler torture than the noble's wheel—  
Remembered only be her rich bequest  
Of reason to the nations ; let all time  
Record beside the ruins she o'erthrew  
The monuments she reared, and how she waged  
Fierce but triumphant war with all that checked  
The flight of thought, and how her prophets heard  
Beyond the castle's doom, beyond the din

Of Mammon's palace rising from its wrecks,  
The footfall of the serried ranks of toil,  
The murmur of the Commonwealth of Peace.

“ Away with lord and slave ! be comrades all,  
Brothers and peers and freemen of one realm,  
Knit in one faith, advancing in one hope,  
Ruled by one law of labour, light and love ! ”  
So rang her clarion-call, startling the world.  
What though too soon the wrath of rival powers,  
The crash of cities and the war-bolt's scream  
Drowned that clear voice ; what though the nations  
yet,

Unmindful of the cause that is mankind's,  
Arm horribly in silence, and 'neath brows  
Burdened with care and darkened with distrust  
Glare upon one another ?—the new Word,



Announced in storm, inscribed in tears and blood,  
Will be fulfilled in peace ; the dead leaf falls,  
The young bud gathers strength to burst its sheath,  
Not in wild nights alone, but genial hours  
Of showery sun and days of frosty calm.

Firmly the people's master-hand doth mould  
The stubborn clay of custom to new shapes  
Befitting the new needs ; slowly the sway  
Of force and fortune yieldeth to the sway  
Of thought and toil ; and surely the grim fight  
For daily bread of those who would be friends,  
That rageth round the holds where age by age  
Mammon hath piled the plunder of the poor,  
Worketh the slave's salvation ; stealthily  
Greed, trembling for the safety of his hoards,  
Heaps them in fewer strongholds ; foes within

Contrive their rivals' fall, and foes without,  
The hungry hosts that surge around the walls,  
Compass them ever closer ; and more loud  
Than yell of hate, or groan of agony,  
Riseth the cry of hope,—“ Comrades, be strong,  
Patient and bold and true ; the better time  
Draws near, when they alone shall reap who till  
And sow and tend the harvests of the world,  
Not they who lounge and waste ! ”

So rings the cry,

The one heart-utterance heard in every land,  
The one clear message from the world to come ;  
It soars above the rage of factious strife,  
The wrangling of the market and the courts,  
The wail of dying creeds and wandering calls  
Of marsh-light mystics, and will lead mankind,  
Obedient to his own unfolding law,

Through many a slough, o'er many a stumbling-  
block,

To righteous ways and plenteousness of peace.

Closer and ever closer all that is

Binds man to man ; he cannot, if he would,

Renounce his brother's charge, or tread alone

The path of his own choosing ; the old faith

Departeth ; the free fight of " Each for Self "

Hath lost its fierce confusion, and in haste

Rangeth itself in two vast leagues, of them

That have, and them that have not ; nor shall these

Make common cause till o'er one mighty host

Shall float one stainless ensign, " All for All."

Far off ! and yet 'twill be ! if not more soon,

Yet not less surely than this anxious age

Hath blossomed from the wildness of a past

As base as we shall seem to eyes unborn.

'Twill be ; the age of single aims will pass ;

The world-soul waketh ; gambling-hell and stews,

The worldling's palace and the wage-slave's den,

Will fall and fade like evil dreams away ;

'Twas not to reach a Heaven so low, that saints

Have wrestled, poets sung and patriots bled ;

They toiled and suffered for a somewhat higher

Than self, for that great Being which doth enfold

The ages and endures beyond their death,

In Whom we live and learn and ever move

Onward, Whose sight is faith, Whose breath is

hope,

Whose dwelling is eternity, Whose power

Is blended of all passions, thoughts and acts

That spring from noble natures and achieve

By slow degrees salvation for mankind.

Our path is 'neath the storm-cloud ; but though  
mists

Perplex and darkness daunt us, yet beyond  
The battling winds, the blindness of the bolt,  
The sobbing rack, is seen a glimpse of blue—  
The promise of a holier day than ours,  
The portals of the City of Content.

Two thousand years have billowed o'er the day,  
Nor worn its deep inscription from Time's shore,  
When on a Grecian plain the powers of Night  
Were scattered and the shackles of the East  
Sundered for evermore ; Freedom that day  
Received her charter, and the People's cause  
Blood-baptism, and the young West learned to soar  
Where yet she had but crawled, and sought and  
won

The cloud-crowned heights, and made the chariot-  
wheels

Of progress glow, till now at last she draws  
The laggard Orient in her train, and holds  
Upgathered in her hand, some dangling loose,  
Some tightly stretched, the reins of the whole world.

The dead of night is past, but the new dawn  
Not yet hath roused the sluggard ; Tyranny  
Hath doffed his robes for slumber, and no more  
Shall do them on ; the rich young fool, made  
drunk

With vanity and vice, securely dreams  
The wealth he never toiled an hour to win  
Is his for ever ; swindler, niggard, churl  
Heavily breathe ; but hark ! what boding sound,  
A sound of limbs that stretch and breasts that sigh,

Is heard the wide world o'er !—at last—oh ! hour  
Long waited for by them that watched and strove—  
At last their ears have heard the trumpet-call,  
At last the light hath pierced those weary lids,  
At last the workers waken !—Tempt them not,  
Ye, whom their nakedness hath softly clothed,  
Ye, whom their slow starvation hath fed sleek ;  
Sleep on, and let the hungry millions tramp  
Unchallenged past your tents ; or, if ye wake,  
Out of their path, as o'er the Gallic bounds  
Your fathers fled ; and see ye stand not by  
With listless smile or academic sneer  
To mock their rude requital ; they have told  
Your lavish lusts and strictly reckoned up  
Your debt of folly ; let them not require  
Of you the silver hairs their sires ne'er saw,  
Of you the bread their little ones have lacked,

Of you the blood their simple sons have shed,  
Of you the honour from their daughters torn ;  
Yield them thus late their own, the fields they till,  
The wealth their toil hath fashioned ; and thereto  
Add fervent thanks if haply they should spare  
To claim arrears, if haply in some hour  
Of generous triumph they should reach the hand  
Of fellowship to all men—even you.

But if with stubborn dullness ye should baulk  
Their progress, and the billows of their might  
Thwarted in vain should rise and overleap  
All natural bounds, devouring in blind haste  
Evil and good alike, forgetting him  
That wisely put his wealth to noble use  
And left his ease and joy to serve the poor,  
Remembering only the fat drones that filch



The gathered honey of the human hive  
And scorn the work-bees—can ye blame their wrath  
That pauseth not to winnow? Hath your caste  
So singled out, when time and chance were theirs,  
From the rough ranks of toil the man whose soul  
Was as a lamp, dusty and soiled, yet lit  
From the great Sun, or hath it stolen the light  
And trampled on the lantern?—dare ye say?—  
Howbeit when those seventimes beleagured walls  
Fell to the trumpet-summons seventimes blown  
Of Israel's captain, she whose casement showed  
The scarlet thread, one friend amid the foe,  
Was rescued, when the conquering hosts poured in,  
For one good service, she and all her house.

Therefore be wise in time, and have a care  
By large endeavour for the public good

To turn the blade of vengeance, and make smooth  
The path of peaceful conquest for the hosts  
That thunder at your city gates ; take heed  
To shed abroad the truth ye cannot quench,  
Lest light turn lightning ; flatter not your souls ;  
Ye hear afar the murmur of the flood ;  
There yet is time ; but if ye stop your ears,  
And cry, as cried the loathsome king, whose breath  
Poisoned the air of France, “ Let the cup’s chink,  
Loud folly, and the laughter of bought love,  
Drown yon low menace ; give us leave to sleep  
And sin away the remnant of our days  
On beds of ease ; then let the deluge come ! ”—  
If thus ye hug your comfort, your sons’ blood  
Be on your heads, haply your own blood too !  
Haply the rotten dykes will not outlast  
Your own poor shred of life ; the suffering throngs

Grow shrewd, and will not evermore endure  
To clench the idle hands that fain would toil,  
To meet the mother's piteous eyes, and watch  
The silent children gaunt with stint and cold  
Huddle their rags around them, while the lord  
Who boasts the land his own whereon they pine,  
The gamester of the mart who wrings close rent  
For dens where rats would sicken, the wage-monger,  
Whose ground of vantage is the wage-slave's need,  
Wastes on his cook the gold that would have fed  
A score of craftsmen, while his brainless heir  
Squanders among the rascals of the ring  
A city's revenue.

The men who pay

With brain and thew forced tribute unto such,  
The men who feed and clothe and deck the world,  
The jaded hacks of labour, busy-blind,

Will pause some day, and stand with folded arms,  
Waiting amid the silence of the wheels  
Till right be done ; nor will they wait in vain ;  
The people's cause is just, and late or soon  
Will triumph ; slowly dawns, through slavehood's  
night,

The quickening truth that all who sweat for hire,  
With thew or brain, are brothers in one bond,  
Seared with one brand, bowed down beneath one  
yoke,

Wistful with one dumb hope which stammers now  
Toward utterance, troubled with one blind desire  
For better things. Their cravings shall not rest  
For ever unappeased ; closer each day  
Toil's dense battalions muster, and their foes,  
Foreboding the long fight of rich and poor,  
Would sound a parley, learning wisdom late.

The issue who can doubt?—If thought and toil  
Make strong, if vice and indolence make weak,  
If justice, truth and honour be not dreams,  
The wrong will cease, the nobler day will dawn.

A day of world-wide peace and rich content,  
Of rightly portioned toil and due repose,  
Of honest comradeship whose “mine” and “thine”  
Waiteth on “ours,” of knowledge freely shed,  
And wide communion of awakened souls,  
Of simple manners flowering from one field  
Where common work makes common wealth—that  
day

Will surely dawn and cast athwart the world  
Shadows to us unknown ; new sun, new shade.

And oft the spirit questions if man's life

Holdeth more joy to-day than when he ranged  
A hunter o'er the wastes that knew no lord,  
And flushed with chase and breeze and sunshine  
caught

The wild maid by the hair, and made her his  
In lawless solitudes, and thought no wrong.  
Soul-sickness was not then, nor doubt's lone  
chill ;

The strain of living dulled not life's keen edge ;  
Loss tore no heart ; death was a wayside thing  
Scarce heeded ; and the savage, if he lacked  
Our costly heritage of art and thought,  
Yet knew not what it is to hear the clod  
Knell on the coffin where some brain that burned  
With youthful ecstasy lies cold, and feel  
The world within one sob, the world without  
One hungry void.

Therefore what profits it

To banish grosser forms of want and woe,  
If finer spirits suffer finer pains,  
If crime but yield to subtler shades of sin,  
And evil's sum abideth? What avails  
The conflict, toil, and patience, if the end  
Be only loftier heaven and deeper hell,  
Not that good time we seek?

The promised land

Is ever on the verge ; yet, laugh or weep,  
We cannot choose but seek it ; and the speed  
Makes our hearts bound and fills our lungs with  
life ;

And as we journey on, sunshine and cloud  
Will smile and frown more evenly, and men  
Breathing one air, illumined with one light,

Will hold each other dearer ; and the best  
Of joys, the joy that knoweth not remorse,  
The fellowship of kindred souls, will spread  
O'er the glad earth like common flowers of Spring

Such fellowship we know not ; for what help,  
What common hope or joy, can knit the heart  
Of him whose life is one stern fight for bread  
To him whose only care is how to tempt  
His jaded appetites, can win the love  
Of her who nightly sews herself a shroud  
For her whose gravest thought is how to deck  
Her dainty charms anew ?—The selfsame wrong  
That starves the poor man's soul sickens the rich  
With surfeit, and dismays the heart of them  
Whose modest portion seems now lavish waste,  
Now penury.



The goal whereto we press,  
The far-off fellowship of quickened souls,  
Is past our ken ; nor will the eyes of man  
Behold it till the fruits of all men's toil  
Are shared aright ; till none are bowed like beasts  
By ceaseless strain, but truth and art have blest  
Each cradle ; till the holds of selfish pride  
Are levelled, and the wise and good alone  
Are held in worship ; till by dint of pain  
Mankind hath learned 'tis better and more sweet  
To serve than rob and wrangle, and the temple  
Reared by all hands is nobler than a batch  
Of paltry huts. But till that bright day dawn,  
Alas ! how long !

And oft in darker hours  
Weary we ask, " What profits all our care ?

So dull and slow the crowd ; so deep the chasm  
Dividing churl from gentle ; the gross beast—  
Slave of the prize-ring, gambling-hell and stews—  
From Thought's throned kings ; the hag who lays  
her snare

For maidens' feet, from the pure ministrant  
By dying beds ; so loudly roars the mob  
Of sluggards, fools and cheats ; so dimly shines  
The lamp of truth and virtue through the gloom ;  
So slowly through the generations' veins  
Pulses the nobler blood ; so light the leaven,  
So huge the lump—a soul that thinks and feels  
Were best outside the turmoil ; life is sweet  
In the calm shelter of a cultured home ;  
The friendly hearth, the love of wife and child  
Close commune with the teachers of all time,  
Deep drinking at the deathless founts of song

The care of flowers and fruit, the master-strains  
Of harmony, the stately walks of art,  
The wonderland of science—these suffice ;  
And sweet to wander through this English land,  
By mead and orchard, copse and old-world grange  
Lulled by the song of brook and bird and bee ;  
And sweet to watch the pale green moon of May  
Rise o'er the tender larch-wood, silvering slow,  
While dies the throstle's song, and the faint scent  
Of young leaves after showers fills all the soul  
With longing for some delicate romance,  
That like the horizon's dreamland evermore  
Eludes embrace."—Ah ! we could dwell at ease  
In life's fair upper chambers, could rejoice  
In life's continual music, conscience-free,  
But that the same fine sense, which apprehends  
Each subtlest note in her rich symphonies,

Hears, saddening all, a dreary undertone,  
The sigh of them that surfeit wearily,  
The wail of them that daily build and tend  
The palace of our joy, but when we feast  
Lie cowering in its dungeons ; we could keep  
Delicious revel with the shapes that haunt  
Soul-slumber, but that ever and anon  
Some ghastly scene of want or waste or greed,  
Some wretch that slays her infant for the gold  
Wherewith to drug her misery, some villain,  
Falsar than fox and earthlier than hog,  
Who cheats the poor to roll in costly filth,  
Bursts through the lovely texture of our dream  
And wakes each honest passion ; and we call  
On all who hold by justice, truth and love,  
To quit for one short breathing-space the roar  
That drowns the single voice, join hands, and take

This simple oath, and teach it to their sons,  
“Never through grief or joy to flinch or flag  
Till right prevail, till all men justly share  
The sweet and plenteous fruit of all men’s toil,  
Till knowledge, art and gladness be as free  
As sunlight, and the gulf ’twixt lord and slave,  
The coarse and fine of manners, garb and speech,  
Sunder our lives no more”—this oath to take,  
Then back into the tumult and the wrong,  
And mend it in God’s name !

’Tis not enough  
To till our little plot, to greet our friends,  
To purge our flesh and feed our soul—to play,  
How graciously soever, with the life  
That is the curse of thousands. None can live  
Unto himself and sin not ; help he must,

Or hinder, man's salvation ; and what spirit  
So mean as his who, when his brother groans,  
Mutters, " I harm thee not ; my dream is good,"  
And turns again to drowse ?

Awake, awake !

Ye that have brains to ponder, hearts to feel,  
And hands to help !—awake, and let your dreams  
Melt as the morning mists ; gird on your swords  
And forward ! linger not ; your time is short,  
The march is long and toilsome ; greater need  
That ye, who are the vanguard of the host,  
Should strike your tents betimes ; and never doubt  
That Man will some day reach the land he seeks,  
Nor deem, because your path is dark and steep,  
Beset with foes and pitfalls, the great name,  
Unknown of old, whereby the ages move

In steadfast order, marshalled by one law—  
The mighty name of Progress—a vain sound.

Not all man's pride, unwisdom, sloth and sin  
Can stay mankind's advance ; the tyrant's scourge  
Doth but unsheathe the patriot's sword ; and  
Greed

Grasps at his own destruction. The old days  
Are gone, when solitary nations grew,  
Flourished and fell like desert palms ; when she,  
Even she who taught the West to build and rule,  
And well-nigh knit the ancient world in one,  
Could shake it with her downfall, and no sound  
Startle that undiscovered world to come,  
Where but the red-skin roamed. Man made not  
then

The hemispheres his pleasure-ground, nor raced

The blasts from shore to shore, nor flashed each  
hour

The lightning message of his weal or woe  
A thousand leagues through voiceless depths of sea ;  
The poet's word, the thinker's scheme, the strain,  
Past speech, past thought, of Music's mighty sons,  
Thrilled not through all the nations till they grew  
The heirloom of mankind ; but every realm,  
The lordliest and the wisest of old days,  
Lived to itself alone, and so decayed.

The doom is changed ; Science and Art and Trade,  
Yea, War herself, have woven round the world  
A web so strong and subtle, that the lands  
Are veined and nerved to one great heart and brain,  
Are limbs of one World-being, and the wrong  
That grieveth each becomes the wrong of all.



No more we lead the narrow single life ;  
The globe is now our storehouse ; day by day  
We steep the leaf and berry of the East,  
We reap the golden harvest of the West,  
We greet our kin who dwell three thousand leagues  
Beneath us. Broadly Progress plants her feet,  
Stumble she may, but naught can hold her steps,  
Till that far land, the glory of whose light  
Glows in her eyes, be reached, where none shall eat  
Who labour not, where just award of toil  
Shall win for all repose and joy, where greed  
Shall bow the neck to help, and strife at last  
Shall turn to peace, and wrong to righteousness.

And murmur not if they, who hold this faith,  
Seem to the crowd, that deem the age they see

The pattern of all ages yet to come,  
Dreamers ;—so be it ;—the temple of mankind  
Is reared by them that toil and fight and die  
For noble dreams, not them that yawn and sneer.  
Hated, derided, trampled by the feet  
Of hurrying throngs, spurned by the hoof of fools,  
Tortured and starved and slain, but at the last,  
When all he loved is unto him no more,  
Believed and revered—the dreamer knows  
And seeks his doom, but sees beyond all clouds  
The eternal sun, and feels within his soul  
The secret pulse of everlasting life.

Forward !—what matters self, if but one spark,  
Quenchless throughout the ages, help to kindle  
The beacon-fire of truth, or light those souls,  
Still brooding o'er the ashes of the past,

With flame from a new Heaven? What matters  
scorn,

Sorrow or death, if but our brothers learn  
To quit the couch of pride and sloth and shame  
And draw the sword of right, our sisters learn  
To kiss no more the wounds of a dead Christ  
But speed his second coming?—One by one  
The weak waves leap and dash their troubled  
breasts

To pieces with a moan upon the rocks—  
And yet the ocean conquers.

Courage, friends!

We stand as on a summer night when long  
The sun has set, and mark the deathly pallor  
Still lingering o'er his grave, and half forget  
That there the newborn day will rise—but see!

The dubious dusk, that wraps all thought and deed,  
Wherein we grope and stumble and lament,  
Is yielding to a steadier light, and they  
That watch upon the peaks have seen afar  
The gleam of a new dawn ; portentous clouds  
Roll thither, and the powers of gloom would quench  
The promise of its glory ; hues of blood  
Flush all its brow with wrath, but swiftly fade,  
And tenderer tones prevailing shed their glow  
Wide o'er the gladsome earth, and evermore  
Increase in power and warmth and loveliness,  
Till emerald, sapphire, ruby, gold and pearl  
Are blent in one clear diamond of the day.

## CANTO II

ARE we but babes, that, meeting Mother Truth  
In strange attire, we bellow first our fear,  
Next timidly draw near her, lastly crow  
Ecstatic credence, till some newer garb  
Fright us ; or own we Nature's kindly care,  
That lets the sere leaf shield the tender bud,  
Till the young life hath gathered strength to thrust  
The old life aside ?—When he, who late descried  
The slowly sure unfolding of all germs  
Of being, proclaimed the now unchallenged law,  
Fools scoffed, priests shrieked, and good men  
shook their heads ;

“A blind black mole, that burrows in the soil,  
And sees not his snout’s length, would sap forsooth  
The very citadel of God.”—So now,  
When heralds of the wondrous change to come  
O’er toil’s wide world announce the gradual dawn  
Of justice and the slow redress of wrong,  
The piercing of thick darkness by thought’s lamp,  
The melting of old icefields by love’s sun,  
The ceaseless long ascent from savage greed  
To full community of lofty aims,—  
No more the wild-beast impulse, “Clutch who can,”  
But in the mart and street the self-same law  
That blesseth home, the rule of “All for All”—  
When thus our seers foretell, the jostling crowd,  
Blind with the dust, deaf with the din of toil,  
Revile them, “Fools and rogues! that think to shake  
Wealth’s firm foundations, build of common clay

A pleasure-house for all, and people it  
With angels !”

Thus the crowd.—But they who know  
That every bud will blossom in its hour  
Can wait for springtime calmly. The base strife  
That rageth in the market-place is seen  
To winnow grain from chaff, the man of might  
From weaklings ; and the chaff, fools take for grain,  
The loud-lunged trumpeter of lying wares,  
The cunning spoiler of toil’s simple slaves,  
The idler who grows sleek while labour starves,  
A mightier fan—the people’s righteous wrath—  
Will some day scatter.

But a nobler strife,  
That ceaseth not when other battles fail,

Prepares a holier conquest ;—bruised and worn,  
But vanquished never, wresting evermore  
Their fenced places from the powers of gloom  
That slay themselves, the soldiers of the light  
Hold undismayed their course. Hope fires their  
eyes,

Faith nerves their heart, and love makes strong  
their arm ;

Their very foes applaud them, after death  
Hath sheathed their sword, and rally round the  
flag

Once mocked and trampled ; and each age shall  
see

The muster-roll of dull and sordid souls  
Dwindle, of lofty souls and wise and true  
Swell evermore, till selfish cunning yield  
To social truth, and darkness unto day.



Growth governs all things ; and the headlong rush,  
The conflict and the eddyings of life's stream,  
Are but as sap that frames and feeds new forms  
Still to unfold ; not virtue's self abides  
Constant ; to let their vengeance fall asleep—  
Christ's law—his fierce forefathers held a sin ;  
To rend the nerves and roast the limbs of them  
That caught and clasped a purer truth, seemed once  
God's bidding ; and an hour will surely rise  
When the gross blots that yet defile man's life  
Will fade ; when they whose fathers thought no  
    shame  
To gloat o'er others' ills, and harboured dwarfs  
To mock at, will as soon deny their guest  
His portion at their feast and snatch at all  
That hand can reach, as round the board of life

Shoulder their neighbours from the common store  
Like hogs around a trough ; will rather choose  
To trample down a cripple in a throng,  
Than make the helpless hunger of the poor  
A vantage-ground to rob them ; rather dare  
To slay by force a feebler than themselves,  
As in old days, and batten on the spoil,  
Than squander in vain show the garnered fruits  
Of others' care, and watch their brethren strain  
Joyless and hopeless through the unvarying days,  
That they may riot. Such growth will come to  
    light ;  
And coin which passeth current in our streets  
Will then be deemed base metal.

  'That calm seer,  
Who widest hath unfolded the great scroll

Of human doom, foretelleth a far day  
When Nature, careful evermore to guard,  
Through mother, lover, patriot, martyr, saint,  
The unselfish type, will yield from these at last  
Love's triumph and the Polity of Peace.  
Fitness alone surviveth ; ay ! but who  
Shall gauge the fitness,—God or Devil ?—Fit  
To tear at one another's throats ? Or fit  
To wisely rule this world of tooth and claw,  
Which yet is man's high empire, wherein claws  
Have sheaths, and teeth have lips to smile and kiss,  
And help o'ermasters hate ?—To sway such world  
Not they are fit who grasp and waste, but they  
Whom Greed itself, while mocking with its mouth,  
Worships at heart,—the generous, just and true,  
The scorers of all base pursuit of gain,  
The lovers of all things that lift the soul,

The loyal to their city and their land ;  
These shall abide, the others pass away ;  
These—for the world around him, moulding man,  
Is by man moulded—shall possess the earth,  
Shall fashion it, from age to age, anew,  
Begetting still of goodlier heritage  
Yet goodlier heirs ; shall slowly wean Mankind  
From Strife's dry, bitter breasts, to feed and smile  
Upon the bounteous bosom of sweet Peace.

Nor only through dominion of high souls  
Is toil's release accomplished ; Avarice  
Weaves unaware his winding-sheet ; in vain  
The profit-monger wringeth the last drop  
From the pinched toiler's heart, in vain would rend  
His victim, like a beast of prey, unwatched ;  
His hungrier rivals scent the spoil, and some

With roar and leap, some crawling like a cat,  
Snatch at it piecemeal, and when all is gulped  
Prowl o'er the blood-stained spot, their green eyes  
slant

With envy and mistrust, unsatisfied ;  
Till now they take late counsel, and henceforth  
Would hunt in packs but eat in solitude  
The portioned quarry. It will not be ; their prey .  
Have learnt like cunning, and from far and near  
Compass with ordered hosts the scattering gangs  
Of seekers after spoil, and will not blench  
Till all the field be theirs.

'Tis done—What then ?

When the long strife is over, when the gulf  
'Twixt rich and poor is filled, when each pursues,  
Obedient to self-love, his brother's good,

And "All for All" is sovereign—what remains  
To hope and toil for?—Fear not; heights beyond  
Our short horizon then will tower afar,  
Tempting to effort; scarcely hath man spelt  
Through nature's alphabet, whose magic book  
Holds in each word a universe; scarce kissed  
The hem of art's rich robe, and scarce explored  
A single creek of music's welling stream,  
That whispers now along the reeds, now laughs  
O'er pebbly beds, now roars below the rocks,  
And lastly flows, a broad majestic flood,  
Bearing the souls of millions with its tide,  
Into the main of song.—'Tis much, that now,  
Even in these murky days of greed and want,  
Beauty hath smiled and wisdom turned her lamp  
On thousands, where till late all things were dark.  
'Tis somewhat—and the commune of such souls

Is life's best boon ;—but when the promised sun  
Hath risen, and equal laws and manners shed  
Their genial influence o'er the minds of men,  
Growths sweet and strange shall flourish, blossom-  
ings

Undreamt-of deck the highways hateful now  
With tumult, dust and blood ; and human souls  
Shall know an intercourse more wide and free,  
More lofty, true and delicate, than aught  
Our dullness can imagine ; genius then  
Shall burst its chains ; no longer shall bare want  
Turn men to beasts, the sordid strife for gain  
Shrivel and starve the soul, nor idle riches  
Gorge it to slumber ; Fortune's foolish sons  
Shall lift no more a languid brow of scorn,  
Nor lackeys do them worship ; but each man  
Shall move amidst his peers, and frankly meet

His neighbour's gaze, and find him, not as now  
In guise and bearing, thought, desire and speech  
An alien, but a fellow. Fancy then  
Shall browse at large, wisdom enrich her store  
Ten thousandfold ; art, like the gladsome sun  
Revealing, through the gray, heaven's boundless  
blue  
And earth's fair shapes and tints, shall mount her  
throne,  
Scatter night's sullen clouds, and light the world ;  
And music, like the common flood of life,  
Well in the hearts of all men.

But till then,  
Alas ! how long ! What mountains to remove  
Of wretchedness and pride ! Through what dense  
thickets



Of tangled ignorance to hew a way !  
What barren wastes of sloth, what rocky wilds  
Of crime and madness, what death-reeking swamps  
Of lust, what sloughs of sottish selfishness  
To traverse, ere the land of hope be won !—

Little it serves that he, who, dawn to dark,  
Is bonds slave to the lords of soil and steam,  
Chinketh more pence, to flatter his dull brain  
With tavern fumes, than his poor sire could count,  
Dying a young-old man in sterner days  
When war made bread a dainty ; little it serves  
If, while the drudge starves seldomer, his lord  
Heapeth from others' patient servitude  
A pile of gain, that viewed in hungrier times  
Had seemed a kingdom's ransom ;—the deep chasm  
Yawns ever deeper ; the rich man knoweth not

The bitterness that gnaws the poor man's heart,  
Nor he the other's loathing, but each dwells  
In thought and speech, desire and deed, apart ;  
Where faith should be, distrust ; where mutual  
    help,

An ever-widening conflict ; little serves  
A fuller belly for the slaves of toil,  
A vaster luxury for the lords of wage,  
If that for which alone all gold is gain—  
The free and equal fellowship of souls—  
Be not a whit the nearer.

Light is good—

And blessed be the bravely wise, whose names  
Are beacons for all time, who suffered scorn,  
Torture and death, rather than quench the spark  
That burned within them—light is good—and well

That science scanneth all things, that those dens  
Where reverend goblins lurked are merry now  
With children's laughter—but not light alone  
Can guide the erring steps of man aright,  
Or heal the hurts of ages. Fain would France,  
In that fierce glare which flashed along the world  
A hundred years gone by, have spread her wings,  
And clutching all the West with eagle claws  
Have soared to Heaven on one broad beam of  
light.

Alas ! the wings were glorious, but the claws  
Were claws of prey ; and that whereon they seized  
Was solid flesh and dragged her down to earth.

Not darkness only hinders ; Truth's worst foes  
Bask in full sunshine—Indolence, that lies  
With nerveless limbs and half-closed lids, and gapes

At the blue main above him, where the clouds  
Set their white sails and chase their snowy sisters,  
Majestically slow ; Pride, with firm foot  
That pauseth where his shallow eyes may greet  
His image in the stagnant pool ; old Custom,  
That grazeth without pause in sheltered croft  
Where grass is deep, and with a paunch well filled  
Settles his heavy bones, and hour by hour  
Cheweth the cud untroubled ; Jealousy,  
Lean-cheeked, slant-eyed, whose hunger grows more  
fierce  
By feeding ; Lust, with trembling hand, that  
clutches  
The crystal cup wherein the wine of life  
Sparkles, and breaks the cup, and wastes the wine ;  
Greed, whose small eyes survey his bloated form  
And rest content—such are the foes of Truth.

And Truth's defenders, who for her pure sake  
Renounce their ease, forget their pride, forego  
Tradition's downhill slope, abandon fame,  
Bridle each lust, and serve not their own good,  
But single-hearted live and die for Truth—  
How few ! and through what struggles, wounds and  
tears,

What pitfalls scarce escaped, what lonely hours  
Of failure and mistrust, they keep their faith.

The same clear light, that beaming from their  
souls

Shines on the land of hope and leads them on,  
Reveals the unheeded snares and stumbling-blocks  
That baulk the feet of Progress, bids them teach  
Their eager hearts the unregarded law,  
That only by one all-accordant will

A host can march in order, and each foot  
That trips delayeth all ; too well they know,  
The nobler order will not come to pass,  
Nor, founded, will endure, till age on age  
Of pain's strict schooling soundly hath informed  
The minds and hearts of all men ; till strife cease,  
Till every frame be strong and beautiful  
And every soul be true ; and since but few  
Of many paths, that part along the road  
Where darkling man doth grope his dubious way,  
Lead to the realm of righteousness—nor these  
The smoothest—many a wrongful age must pass,  
Ere from the loins of them who wander now  
From virtue's way, and lured by marsh-lights sink  
In sin's contagious slough, is born a race  
That walks aright as surely as the flower  
Turns to the loving sun.

How long to wait

Till that full day, the wisely-good best know ;  
And they who hold their lives in constant pledge  
To speed its rising, need not faith alone,  
But strength to plough the trodden ground of Use,  
Courage to sow the seed 'mid storm and gloom,  
Patience to wait its growth, and at the last  
Contentment to reap little. Well may he  
Endure with joy the martyr's pains, who cheered  
And blinded by hope's dazzling beams expects  
A quick and plenteous harvest ; but foreseeing  
The glory of a future which his eyes  
Shall ne'er behold, and knowing with what slow  
And ceaseless pains the tillage yieldeth fruit,  
How distant the due season, and how weak  
The mightiest striving of a single age  
To foster good—this knowing, yet to ply

With warm and steadfast will his thankless task—  
This marks the hero ; and the faith of such  
Assures its own fulfilment

Forward ! then,  
With courage, but with patience, sons of light !  
Firmly but slowly let your footfall sound ;  
And while your brows are lifted to the heavens,  
See that your steps be sure, your course be straight,  
And while your standard presseth to the van,  
Remember still the rear, and hold your ranks.  
Ye shall not reach the promised land alone,  
But one and all ; the world's old footsores first  
Must heal, the foul be pure, the false be true,  
The churl be kind, the drunkard reel no more,  
The brute be tamed, the bigot raise his lids,  
The dreamer wake, before those city gates



Open, where neither lord nor slave abides,  
But freemen only.

Not the subtlest scheme  
Contrived by all the wisest of this world  
Can shape the course of things ; the good will  
grow  
Its own dark way ; we can but watch and tend  
Its slow increase, and tending heedlessly  
May check it, and uprooting some rank weed  
May tear the fibres searching through the soil  
Where evil feeds with good. Howbeit, to tend  
The slow and secret growth of good aright  
Craves no unworthy husbandman ; the clay  
Is heavy, and the field is thick with tares ;  
Shod must he be with patience, robed with truth,  
Discreet of purpose, diligent of hand,

And in his heart—as in the heart of that  
Strong singer who foretold 'mid Israel's woes  
The kingdom of her peace—must ever glow  
The vision of the labourer's recompense,  
The golden glory of the harvest-home.

There was an age, whose records rudely graven  
Are wellnigh worn away, when bulk and thews  
Alone were sovereign, and the large of limb  
Trod down the slight, as some huge river-horse  
Tramples the reeds beside an Afric lake—  
An age of dwarfs and giants. Slowly forth  
From that gross gloom a gleam of cunning broke—  
The weakling's weapon—and from more to more  
Grew, till the strong were fain to learn its use.  
Lastly, than force and cunning mightier far,  
The power of fancy rose ; in weight of limb

The desert brute o'ermasters man, in skill  
The spider may perplex him, or the bee,  
The pinion of the soul is man's alone ;  
And urged on fancy's wing, reason hath sought,  
Espied and won new empires, till man's spirit  
Mounts like an eagle, every beat of wing  
Revealing vaster prospects, and yet soars,  
Amazed at the wide wonder of the world.

Time hath unclasped his volume to our gaze ;  
Spellbound we scan those pages which the Past  
Hath hallowed with its finger, and we see  
A mellower glory flush them than the light  
Which glares upon our page ; but when the  
hopes,

The strivings and the triumphs that we know,  
Are gray, no page will seem to after men



Coasting along their tideless sea, beheld  
Long billows from an undiscovered world  
Roll slowly in, and, where the god of strength  
Had fixed his pillars, leap against the rocks,  
Bound thundering back, and waste themselves in  
foam.

The baffled East withdrew, but lent the West  
Her balanced needle trembling toward the pole,  
Pilot, o'er pathless wastes of wave and wind,  
To that vast ocean-mainland where a man  
Might hold his faith untroubled by the frown  
Of pope or king.

Through many a changeful age  
The white-winged messengers of war and peace  
Traversed that mighty solitude, till now  
Our prows of steel each hour 'gainst storm and tide

Cleave their appointed way, and the twin wires  
Flash at a kiss the tidings of our weal  
'Neath twice three hundred leagues of restless  
brine ;

They lie—those sister threads that link in one  
The Old World and the New World—where no light  
Nor sound nor motion liveth, mantled o'er  
With finest snow of shells, so delicate,  
A breath would crush their fabric ; overhead  
The blasts do battle, and the writhing clouds  
Weep with the waves. The levin's rage is tamed  
To light our midnight musings and give back  
Forgotten accents of the mouldered dead ;  
The sun is made our limner, and the stars  
Reveal their unseen splendours unto eyes  
By man contrived, that see where man is blind.  
We watch the shapeless embryos of systems

Fashion themselves in the vast womb of space,  
We see the gnat's heart beat, and 'neath our lens  
The water-drop becomes a peopled realm.  
The loom whereon the weaver slowly wrought  
His simple web has grown a living thing ;  
We give the word, and lo ! the shuttle flies  
Unerring, while deft fingers of bright steel  
Catch at the threads and weave a damask sheen  
Subtler than winter's handiwork. The blind  
Receive their sight ; the days of man increase ;  
The knife hath lost its terrors, and performs  
Its office calmly, while the sufferer lies  
In merciful oblivion ; the dark laws  
Of birth and death are searched.

Thought, free as light,

Enters at last the hovel ; they who drudge,

From dawn to dusk, forgather in the dark,  
Look in each other's eyes and find a soul,  
That long time flickering soon will burst in flame ;  
A silence holds the hosts of toil, like that  
Strange silence, broken here and there with sobs,  
Which fell upon the negro in the night  
That saw his slavehood ended ; dumb he knelt,  
Trembling to take possession of his life,  
Till midnight's last stroke, and the sudden day  
Of heaven's white fire-flash, and the salvo-peal  
Of thunder echoing through the fateful night,  
Proclaimed him slave no more. Even such a spell  
Holds labour's troubled legions ; but they wait  
A like deliverance, and fulfilled at last  
With one strong pulse of common grief and hope  
Beckon to one another o'er the seas ;  
Hunger and cold and darkness have not quenched



Their spirit quite. With all its wrongs and woes,  
This age of iron is the age of thought,  
This age of labour is the age of love.

'Tis somewhat that our stature hath outgrown  
The mail our fathers wore, that week by week  
A thousand bloodless battles on the sward  
Tighten the thews and purge the blood of youth  
And drill the civic spirit ; and glad of cheer  
We mark the lamp of learning more and more  
Make the dark places light and waken souls ;  
But chiefly we give thanks that man hath caught,  
Even in the midst of greed's inglorious fray,  
Clear glimpses of a nobler life, and sees  
The hunger after righteousness and truth  
Plead in his brother's eyes, and grasps his hand,  
And cries, "Thy cause is mine."

Our laws are cast

In larger moulds, no longer shaped to please  
A tyrant's humour or a prelate's pride,  
But fashioned by the people's sovereign will ;  
And that which, voicing forth men's dumb desires  
And formless thought, is mother of all laws—  
The poet's word—no longer adulates  
From taverns, loud with cackling wits, the rich,  
But communes in sincerity of soul  
With nature's heart and man's ; no longer struts  
In wig and lace, sham of a sham, but breathes,  
In music broad and free as ocean's roll,  
The mighty yearnings of this wonder-age.

Firmly the people's wider grasp doth seize  
The heaped-up measure of the nation's wealth  
And shake it slowly level ; toil and rest

And health and joy shall be in days to come  
Common to all as sunshine ; stumbling-blocks,  
That evil men or dull have set or left  
To trip their brethren's feet, the wise and good  
Still gathering strength will one day overcome ;  
And natural ills, birth-stains of frame and soul,  
Nature herself—who mother-like chastiseth  
The child that spurns her laws, but mother-like,  
If he repent, kisseth the smart away—  
Will surely cure, if but we thwart her not.

We shall not hear the triumph-song resound  
In that sweet city of peace, nor our sons' sons  
Shall view its stately splendours—for the world  
Is younger far than old—but blind is he  
Who deemeth not this age of vast design,  
Of snapping chains and soaring thought, the prince

Of all the ages past ; and base is he  
Who takes no joy, forecasting how the page  
That tells our tale will some day thrill the souls  
Of happier men redeemed through our distress.

Therefore we lose not heart, but ever press  
Forward, remembering that the lordliest tree  
Was once a seed and thrust through stubborn soil  
A pair of pallid leaflets toward the light ;  
Remembering how each unfamiliar good,  
Which braveth frost and tempest now, will grow  
Old in its turn, and when its wholesome strength  
Is wasted and decayed, how they will most  
Uphold its age whose fathers hindered most  
The promise of its youth ; knowing that heights  
We vainly strive to scale will yet become  
Highways. And though the slow advance of things,

Like some broad-moving flood, seemeth at times  
To lose all patience, and with rush and roar  
Take at a leap the precipice and ride  
Triumphing over shoal and rock and bank,  
We rather trudge than hasten, wotting well  
That only after many an angry bar,  
And many a tedious bend, the stream of time  
Will smoothly widen to the wished-for sea.

Too well, alas ! we know the goodliest husk  
Of civic rule is bootless, if the core  
Of private life be foul ; yet tainted rind  
Makes rotten fruit. We seek no single cure  
For Earth's ten thousand evils ; yet disease  
Heals not itself unhelped. We know, the road  
That leads to Heaven is dusty, steep and long ;  
More need to start betimes. Sadly we own

That Freedom's feet are blood-stained, and her  
eyes

Ablaze with frenzy ; yet her soul is pure.

And like the sage who penned, when the red storm  
Of France was at its fiercest, that calm page  
Of mankind's heavenward march, we cheerly say,  
"The sky is overcast, the thunder-god  
Musters his sullen squadrons ; but these melt ;  
The blue abides."

The order we foretell  
Is no raw scheme conceived in solitude  
'Twixt woe and envy, but a gradual growth,  
Sown by experience, planted in the past,  
As labour wide, as hunger sure, and strong  
As help itself ; no system of the schools,  
But a world-force. We boast not to discern

Each aspect of the changes it shall bring  
O'er man's wide workfield—toil through law set  
free,

Greed's tumult ended, beauty's face unveiled ;—  
Nor were they proven liars, who first proclaimed  
The reign of steam, because they laid not down  
The limits of its kingdom, imaged not  
The rushing of our iron steeds by night,  
Their white manes flaming while the riven rocks  
And sleeping towns crash past them, and heard not  
The hammer's mighty thud, that yet can crack  
The wren's egg and not crush it, our sea-giants  
Plunging through storm and darkness undismayed,  
Or watched the ceaseless whirring of the wheels  
Yield wealth ten thousandfold.—So we who preach  
The mighty power of union take no shame  
To own the prospect of the world to come

Hidden from keenest vision, but with clouds  
Of glory.

We foretell a newborn age,  
Begotten in the shadows of the Past,  
Long nurtured in the secret womb of Time,  
The hour of whose deliverance draweth nigh  
In pangs and groans, perchance in wrath and  
• blood;  
Yet birth is but the promise of a life,  
Not life itself; and that which sudden throes  
Have brought to light, slow years of patient care  
Must perfect.

The quick beat of Freedom's wings  
Is heard as clearly by the ears that dread  
As by the ears that hail it; and the sceptre,



Wrenched from oppression's clutch, the people's  
hand

Shall grasp with clearer wisdom, calmer will,  
Shall ever wield more widely, till at last  
Earth's fruitful workfields and fair pleasure-grounds,  
Where age by age the poor have slowly shed,  
To cloy a few, their bitter sweat and blood,  
Shall be their own dominion.

Glebe and gold,  
The pastures and storehouses of mankind,  
Won in past ages, when the single arm  
Sufficed, by lords who proved themselves in  
might

Best of their race, feed oft the sloth and pride  
Of weaklings, fools and lechers, while the poor,  
How wise or true or strong soe'er, are caught

In a tight snare of tangled circumstance,  
Where struggling only maimeth.

But the curse  
Shall not endure ; the workers wake, and learn  
That single strands, a child might snap, can twine  
To cables ; they shall weave a stronger bond  
Than aught their lords have woven, they shall wind  
Its coils about the tyrant, and possess  
At last the world their care and thought and skill  
Have fashioned and preserved. Then Greed's  
fierce fight,  
Rough schooling of a race half-savage yet,  
Shall cease, its purpose served, and Justice late  
Ascend her throne ; labour and rest and joy  
Shall be the blessed lot of all, and none  
Shall stint but rogues and idlers ;—equals all,

Not in the gifts of nature, but the claims  
Of brotherhood.

Then not the chance of birth,  
Nor hoarded gold wrung from the weak and poor,  
But only the true kingdom of high souls,  
The hero's glory, and the godlike brow  
Of genius, shall have worship ; then shall gladness  
Course through the people's veins, as when the  
          hearts

Of some vast throng are thrilling to one strain  
Of lofty music ; pleasure shall not need  
To hide her eyes, ashamed that others' grief  
Pays for her pastime ; luxury's sick craving,  
That owns no bound and therefore owns no peace,  
That feeding but provoketh, shall be turned  
To wholesome hunger, and lust's lawlessness

To wise and sweet restraint ; and Earth's best  
boon,

The fellowship of hand and head and heart,  
The commune of true souls, shall lighten toil  
And heal life's deep divisions.

But such boon  
Will never bless mankind till the dark gulf  
'Twixt rich and poor, 'twixt sage and fool, 'twixt  
churl

And gentle is bridged over—for true friends  
Are ever equals ;—and that golden field,  
That gladsome harvest of man's fellowship,  
Now springing round our feet, will only reach  
Its fulness after sunlight of free thought  
And sunwarmth of wide sympathy have nursed  
Its growth for ages.

Mankind's slow advance

From this misgoverned waste, where one man's  
weal

Worketh another's sorrow, to that realm

Where all conspire for all, is steeper far,

More toilsome, devious, and beset with snares,

Than aught his feet have traversed. They that  
lag,

Lamenting the old days, and they that haste

To greet the future, first must suffer much,

Much yield and much forbear, ere the long march

Be ended, and the promised land descried.

A weary way ;—but whether with good cheer,

Or downcast eyes, we needs must take the road ;

Backward we cannot ; the world-powers that wait

Our nod, inwrought from land to land, no blow,

That spares this orb, can cancel ;—the fierce giant  
That leaps to life when fire and water wed,  
Thunder's fleet daughter, and the subtle spirits  
That mingle in Earth's veins to save or slay,  
And mightier than all these, the living force  
That beckons and controls them, the arch-force  
Of human thought, of human love and will—  
These are the people's weapons ; armed with  
these  
Toil's dense array shall hold its onward course,  
Shall compass the strong places where the lords  
Of wealth sit throned, and greed's inglorious sway  
Shall fail, as failed the sway of cowl and crest  
When learning woke, and art shook off her chains,  
And commerce spread her wings, and thought  
caught fire,  
And Europe had new birth.

The people's lips  
Have touched the rim of wisdom's cup, and soon  
Shall drink it deeply, till the sacred wine  
Bound in their veins and fill them with the strength  
Of giants ; and the watchword " All for All,"  
Uttered by millions marshalled in one cause,  
Shall win redress for labour's heaped-up wrongs,  
None daring to gainsay. But if the rich,  
Drowsy with comfort, stop their ears, that watch-  
word  
Shall heighten to a battle-cry, and wake  
A conflict which shall grant no truce till toil  
From the fat purse of idle luxury  
Hath wrung the utmost farthing.

Pity then

For such as fain would put their needless wealth

To faithful use—the wise, the kind, the just ;  
Vainly they struggle, tangled in a web  
That is not of their weaving. Oft, when ease,  
High manners, and the pride of stately homes,  
The healthful glow of roaming o'er the world's  
Wide pleasure-ground, and all the finer joys  
That blossom in the summer atmosphere  
Of opulence, delight the rich man's soul—  
The drear abodes of penury, where swarm  
Gain's dull and haggard slave-hordes, suddenly  
Loom round him ; and he feels as one that quits  
A feast, and, homeward journeying, while the wind  
Fans his flushed cheek, sees shivering 'neath the  
hedge

An outcast woman gnawing a stale crust  
For very life, the babe upon her heart  
Plucking at empty breasts ;—an alien she



In garb and feature, thought, desire and deed,  
And yet a sister ;—gladly would he yield  
Some costly superfluity, to still  
Her misery's reproach, but that his gift  
Would seem a sand-grain cast into a gulf  
That bounty cannot fill—"What use," he cries,  
"To fling among the ravenous herd the store  
Of my fair jewels?—Christ bade it ; but the poor,  
He spake of, were a handful ;—had he known  
Our coarse and grimy millions, stale with toil  
And sour with sweat, that spice their drink with  
oaths,  
Wallow in filth, and breed like sewer-rats,  
He had not counselled thus. Moreover, Christ  
Lived upon alms ;—the poor have ever preached  
This gospel of renouncement to the rich ;  
And still the rich grow stronger, and the poor

Weaker ; so be it ; the poor, in life's hot fray,  
Have yielded ground, they or their sires ; while we  
Enjoy the conquests of our fathers' might,  
Conserve the nobler type, and, safe embowered  
In park and palace, nurture stately bearing,  
Calm thought and gracious speech, which else  
would die.

'Tis well ; we do but yield assent to laws  
That Nature made, not we."—So comforted,  
And heaving a short sigh of half content,  
Half pity, he fares homeward.

But the poor  
Have pondered it, and will not any more  
Be cozened with this creed of Anti-Christ.  
Man is not wolf or beaver, that the son  
Should build as built the sire, each generation

Wrangle and filch as we ; Nature disdains  
A realm so narrow ; and man's noblest powers—  
Wisdom and might to tame the brute within,  
Experience to live down his crimes and follies,  
Skill to contrive what fancy hath conceived,  
Harmonious effort toward a common good,  
Reflection, foresight, sympathy, with all  
That lifts him ever higher from the dust—  
Are Nature's gifts, and unto man as proper  
As cunning to the fox. Man's slow ascent  
From bestial ways to dignity of life,  
From war to peace, from wrong to righteousness,  
From slavery to freedom, is no less  
Nature's behest than that which bids the grub  
Forget the crawling life of old, and wake  
To find herself a winged and lustrous thing,  
Companion of the sunbeams and the flowers.

Even so with man ;—Nature hath not ordained  
For few the butterfly's bright play, for most  
The worm's ignoble wanderings, but wings  
At last for all.

The sumptuous bowers, where Pride  
Wasteth the slender substance of the poor,  
Shall fall as fell Rome's drear magnificence,  
And comely homes shall flourish where to-day  
Are loathsome dens. The poor will learn to baulk  
The rich man of his laughter when a score  
Of desperate slaves contend to clutch the wage  
Of one ; will rather choose to rear a pair  
Of sturdy saplings, spreading healthful arms  
To breeze and shower and sunshine, than a thicket  
Of stunted underwood. The man of toil,  
Slow as a dray-horse, gentle, patient, strong,

Will cease at last to bear the monstrous load  
Of others' pride, and wage for others' waste  
The sordid strife we suffer, wherein he  
Prevails, who bawling his false wares can lie  
The loudest ; will no more endure to see  
His sons grow wan with hunger, toil and care,  
His daughters seize the harlot's poisoned cup  
For mere oblivion of the fetid den  
Where Fashion's languid tyranny condemns  
Her needle-slaves to pine.

The Greek of old,

Nobly impatient of the slave's harsh lot,  
Sang of a good time coming, when the shuttle  
Should labour of itself, and man be free,  
His light toil o'er, to gladden his long ease  
With dance and feast and praise of the good gods.

So sang the Greek ;—and now the shuttle flies  
Unhandled, and the tameless elements  
Obey man's bidding, but by man misused  
Heap, for the few, possessions past the lust  
Of avarice, pollute the brow of heaven,  
And leave the burdened millions a grim choice  
'Twixt slavehood and starvation. He is robed  
In softness, housed in splendour, and fed sleek,  
Body and soul, with dainties and delights,  
Who never wrought by sweat of brow or brain  
The value of a crust ; while he who bears  
From dawn to dark the burden of the world,  
Raises its harvests, rears its lordly roofs,  
Clothes it with grace, and makes it for his master  
A dainty pleasure-house, must fight to win  
The rich man's leavings, dwell in sordid gloom,  
And seek forgetfulness in flattering fumes

Of poisoned drams ; his wife is gaunt with toil,  
And pale for lack of sleep ; hunger and care,  
And pangs of travail, 'mid the ceaseless strain  
To feed and clothe her babes, have gnawed away  
Her beauty, and stern furrows scarred her brow ;  
Her eye is cheerless in her withered cheek,  
Wanting the balm of tears—she hath no pause  
To weep in, only day by day she drags  
Her weary footsteps nearer to the grave.

But that sweet gospel of the Greek of old  
Shall have fulfilment ; not for evermore  
Shall they who dream and paint and pen fair things  
Alone be man's consolers, nor those only  
Physicians of the wounded soul who drown  
Its agony in music ; but he too  
Who schemes some useful wonder shall behold

His gift no more make tyrants of the drones,  
And of the work-bees slaves, but win for all  
Leisure and health and gladness—meed enough  
For highest toil, if further meed be asked  
Than the great joy of genius in its use,  
That prompts the lark to soar, the seer to search,  
The giant to stretch forward to the goal,  
The thinker to lose fortune, fame and ease  
For truth's sake, and the singer, toiling still  
The livelong day for bread, to yet arise  
With dawn, and watch at midnight, for the love  
Of poesy.

He slanders humankind  
Who doubts if men will toil, save to avoid  
The goad of hunger, or to win the prize  
Of riches wrung from others' misery ;—



Thinker and artist, healer, patriot, saint  
Cry shame on him. Ev'n now the craftsman joys  
To ply his craft, the strong man to put forth  
His strength, albeit another reaps the gain ;  
Will he stand idle therefore, when the sheaves  
Belong no more to slothfulness, the gleanings  
To toil, but all the harvest is his own ?  
Taketh a man no pride to lead the chase,  
Not lag behind, albeit the quarry slain  
Is not for him alone ; or doth the soldier  
Shrink' from the cannon's mouth because his  
comrades  
Will share with him the triumph?—The wide world  
Proclaimeth honour mightier far than greed,  
And help than strife ; from sea to sea the nations,  
Choked with war's dust and wearied with its din,  
Shout it to one another ; and those hordes

That battle daily for a wretched wage,  
To pamper idlers, make it a muster-word  
For the great day of reckoning.

Wrong sits crowned,  
But not for ever ; knowledge daily paves  
The path for justice ; and though yet afar,  
She cometh. Happy he, who, when these storms  
Have rolled away, shall dwell beneath a sky  
Bright with the sun of righteousness ; then wealth  
Shall not breed want, nor toil be slave to waste,  
But all shall succour all ; then this vexed knot  
Of tugging selfishness, this vast disorder,  
This cumbersome excess of costly show,  
This haggard strain, shall cease, and rich content  
Shall spread her pinions like a peaceful noon  
O'er the blest earth, and man be glad and free

Alas ! but oftentimes the heart turns sick  
With sorrow, and the eye of faith grows dim,  
Marking the blind contempt of those that have,  
The rage of those that have not ; watching life's  
Broad flood roll by, its surface sparkling free—  
The fickle sport of sunbeam, cloud, and wind—  
Its depths drawn darkly onward, where disease,  
Lust and oppression, madness, hate and crime  
Mingle their turbid eddies ; and doubt crieth,  
“ So foul a stream will never lose its taint,  
Nor reach the expected ocean ; but ere long  
The dykes will sunder, and some hideous deluge  
Ride over all ; and when that waste of waters  
Hath washed Earth clean once more, a younger  
race  
Will suffer, flourish, sin and fall as we ;—  
And so for ever—till the sick old planet

Grow death-cold, and the sun with all his train  
Shock into Hercules."

Sad souls there be  
Who bode such evil.—Courage!—man, that knows  
His days are numbered, doth not therefore fling  
His cares and hopes aside, and let the thief  
Plunder his store unchallenged. Humankind  
Is sound at heart; the wise and good increase;  
And chiefly gain's stern fight hath lent to men  
Their cruel masks, which gladly they will doff  
When strife shall yield to concord. Never hand  
Hath wrought a marble god of common clay;  
And not the holiest laws inscribed in Heaven  
Can bind mean hearts to justice; yet if they,  
Whose nobler promptings age by age have lured  
Their brethren ever further from the brute,

Had held their peace because the brute-life pleased  
The general herd, man had been wandering still  
A savage in the wilderness. He chargeth  
Men's bosoms with the lightning-flash who  
summons

From narrow seeking after narrow ends  
To righteousness and justice ; and the roar  
That bursts from the vast throng, ten thousand  
hearts

Heaving as one, when some great patriot pleads,  
Is stronger than the earthquake ; petty aims  
And paltry hates are drowned in that broad voice,  
And all, exalted o'er themselves, will blush  
Even to think the baseness each would act  
Single and uninspired.—The very bulk  
Of ocean, where the wind hath room to range,  
Purgeth it, while the standing pond grows foul.

Therefore 'tis well that closer, day by day,  
The wide world o'er, the sons of toil forgather,  
And dreamers of a loftier life than ours  
Utter their burning visions, and just souls,  
Impatient of disunion's wasteful fray,  
Rally their scattered powers, and pledge their faith  
To lead true lives, to taste no pleasure wrung  
From others' grief, but share the common load  
According to their strength. What matters it  
That they, whose hands have planted here and there  
Oases in the desert of man's strife,  
Lived but to see the sand-blast strip their palms,  
The sand-drift choke their fountain?—'tis by  
    stumbling  
We learn to walk aright ; had no star-seer  
Mistold on Eastern plains the doom of kings,

We had not known the moment when the moon  
Would mask her brow with shadow, or some wild  
And bright-haired truant through the fields of  
space

Visit our skies once more. What matters scorn?—  
The record of man's triumphs is the tale  
Of dreams at first derided, next assailed,  
Lastly fulfilled. Where'er a young growth springs,  
Down-trodden by tradition's heavy hoof,  
There waits—the sap forced back to feed the root—  
A harvest for the future.

Even now

Such harvest waxeth. They who, sick to see  
Strife's blind self-slaughter, point to that fair realm  
Where Concord spreads her feast for all who will,  
Long mocked-at, then maligned, are now believed.—

None saith, "The world stands still;" yet that  
which moves

Must move somewhither; and what means this  
sound

Of labour's mustering legions, or these hands

That reach across a thousand leagues of sea

To succour a fall'n comrade, if the end

Be only the old reckless race to win

Self's goal by others' stumbling, if the city

Become once more the nomad's lonely tent?—

Madmen would wiselier dream—but if man's path

Lead not to self's inhospitable slough,

A sunnier clime awaiteth him, where, toil

Made light by union, thought and faith at one,

Hate overcome by help, and art uncaged,

Each soul shall breathe the same pure air and light,

And differ but in graces.



Blind are they

To Nature's beckonings who fear lest men,  
Fattened no more on others' want, but bending  
Their shoulders to the general wheel of toil,  
Should lose the soul's distinction. Know we not  
That bushman features bushman, driven to seek  
The same base living by the same base means,  
As wolf resembleth wolf; that thought and art  
Then flourished first when mutual help had  
found

A swifter and a safer road to ease  
Than single greed?—What space for growth of sou  
Hath he who strains the deathlong day, to wring  
From Mammon's clutch his wage of crust and  
rags—

Less valued than a horse—for if he die,  
What then? another fights to fill his place;

But horses have their price?—depraved and starved,  
Warped, numbed and stunted, how shall such as he  
Put forth those beauteous blossoms of the spirit,  
That purge indeed the air, yet will not bloom  
Where all is foul and sunless?

Wise were he  
Passing man's scope, whose wit could apprehend  
Each glory of the landscape that lies hid  
Beyond our day's horizon—strange delights,  
Strange griefs, strange hopes;—but, clearly to  
discern  
Some wide and various harvest of the soul,  
That waits the tillage of a nobler race,  
And will not spring while of the husbandmen  
Some filch the seed, some trample on the blade,  
And most are stupid with the mill-horse round

Of sordid cares, or maimed with misery—  
This craves no prophet.

Surely from the heat  
That trembles in the world's deep soul to-day  
Will rise new growths and lovelier forms of life—  
Not suddenly, as when the metal cools,  
The mould is cracked, and lo ! the statue stands ;  
But slowly, like the growth of a great tree.  
The husbandman may train the boughs, may graft  
A nobler stock to feed upon its strength,  
But change its kind he cannot ; husbandry  
Maketh the crab yield pippins, never grapes ;  
And those old promptings of the heart of man,  
The love of home and kin, the joy to reap  
The fruit of his own labour, howsoe'er  
Their nature may be bent to worthier ends,

Are rooted in the ages, and though lopped  
A hundred times will spread their arms anew.

We seek not to molest them—toil is good  
And toil's reward—we seek to find for all  
A place in the world's workfield, where good will  
May win good recompense ; we seek to stay  
The spoiler's hand, and bid the idler yield  
The sheaves he gathered not, that they may eat  
Who labour, and the generous heart no more  
Be bled by churls.

Self-help is good ; but they  
Who mark the trophies of man's care for man,  
His struggle from the savage to the saint,  
His yearning after justice, beauty, truth,  
The simple steadfast power of welded wills,

The widening vision of the human soul  
Once swathed in darkness—well may such foretell  
A self-help stronger than the gripe of beast  
Or bandit, surer than the wasteful strife  
Of greed devouring greed.

A mighty change,  
Enfolded in the troubled womb of time,  
Shapeth itself in silence ; foolish hopes  
And fond alarms disquiet faithless breasts ;  
Love waits the birth unfaltering.—The wise world  
Hath not forgot how in a simple room  
A Jewish craftsman with his fisher-friends  
Once ate their farewell supper ; high priests hissed  
Their spite ; Rome curled a lip of sickly scorn ;  
But life was with the little brother-band,  
And mankind's slow salvation.—Love can wait.

## DIES NON

THE brooding halcyon hour is here at last ;  
The world's tumultuous wrong has taken flight  
With that dark ocean-mood, which yesternight  
Did battle with the blast.

Heaven smiles to see its beauty in the bay ;  
Care lies a-drowning where the blue tide laves  
The rust-red weed, and frolic of light waves  
Laughs heaviness away.

Fresh from the ripple's delicate caress,  
I lean upon the bosom of a rock,

That basks with me, forgetful of the shock  
Of storms, the sea's distress ;

And listening, while the slow wave-crests unroll  
Their splendour, to the sea-mew's lonely cry,  
Sweet echoes of a sister melody  
Waken along my soul.

Once more I seem to hear the wood-dove croon  
In secret covert consecrate to spring,  
The whisper of the forest's half-fledged wing  
Fanning the flush of noon ;

The long sea-murmur sweeping o'er a main  
Of billowy brake and glade, where sunshine  
dyes  
With touches of her tenderest harmonies  
The treetops' purple plain ;

And once more through the oak-grove's hoary  
screen,

Beyond the faded fern, are caught afar

Glimpses of larchwood, where the wind-flowers  
star

The thicket's early green.

Again I seek the time-worn stones that pent

A garden once, deep-sheltered from mankind,

Now haunted only by the homeless wind

And memory's low lament ;

And musing watch the kestrel o'er his bower

Hover, with kingly pinions scarce astir,

The butterfly, spring's motley harbinger, .

Sway on the sun-kissed flower ;

Or mark the slender shadows rise and fall

Where in their silken cradles beech-leaves dream



Of summer's bridal, and the soft sunbeam  
Sleeps on the windless wall,

And warms to life the old romance that strays  
Forgotten where the rose-leaves mouldering lie,  
And weds it with the gracious luxury  
That decks these fuller days—

The nestling grange that seems a friendlier part  
Of Nature's self, in outward guise akin  
To some moss-suited crag, and clothed within  
By Nature's consort, Art ;

There Welcome waits beside the ruddy glow  
That flecks the roof and laughs along the floor,  
There Farewell passeth through the crowded door  
With lingering steps and slow ;

There, ranged in carven shrines, rich caskets keep  
The embalméd wisdom of the deathless dead,  
And music summons pity, love and dread  
From out the spirit's deep ;

Or while the wine-cup sparkles, thought's free tide  
Flows eddying onward, limpid, smooth, profound,  
Or leaping from the heights with sudden bound  
Laugheth where shallows glide.

Care vexeth not, nor calumny molests  
The quiet of that home ; but settled soft  
O'er roof and lawn, o'er bower and stream and  
croft,  
A mellow gladness rests.

The squirrel on the daisy-freckled grass  
Sports unafraid ; the poet's daffodil

Stoopeth to kiss his semblance in the rill ;

And when spring's love-dreams pass,

Roses shall queen it, making every breath

A pant of joy ; the peach shall sun her cheek

When bird-songs tire and hues of evening streak

The creeper's beauteous death.

Nor is the scene less fair when dead leaves lie

Thick in the pool's clear bosom, and the pines

Darken, and o'er the sodden meadow shines

A blue November sky ;

Or when the bare boughs' livelier tints are lost

In black against the snow, and from the eaves

Hang ice-spears, and the holly's trim-cut leaves

Are edged and spiked with frost.

Ah ! genial home ! where every season lends  
Fresh grace, where hospitality's glad rites  
Bless, and the loving-cup of deep delights  
Circles among close friends.

There youth might twine the laurel and the rose,  
Manhood forget the world, and old age lull  
The soul to slumber, calm and beautiful  
As autumn's rich repose ;

But that afar, where smothered with a pall  
Of vapour the great cities sweat and groan,  
From misery's dull heart a weary moan  
Ascendeth, marring all.

## WELCOME TO THE QUEEN

ON the occasion of Her Majesty's visit to Birmingham, in the year of Her Jubilee, to lay the foundation-stone of the Victoria Law Courts.

HAIL ! Mother of thy people ! Hail !

Who deignest, in this golden year,

To lift awhile the widow's veil,

And with a sovereign smile to cheer

The gloom, that widening hour by hour

Enfolds the heart of England's toil,

The clouds that, ever gathering, lower

Above the clang of our turmoil.

Now wellnigh thirty years have lent  
A graver glory to thy brow,  
Since last our barrier'd thousands rent  
The air with one vast welcome ; now  
The beard is grey of him who ran,  
Clasping his child, to gain a place ;  
And the child's self, a stalwart man,  
Shoulders his way to see thy face.

What though we miss the genial voice  
Of that pure soul, whose princely tone,  
A nation's pride, love's simple choice,  
Made faultless music with thine own ;  
His gracious influence rules us yet,  
His memory still inspires our way,  
And joy makes welcome of regret—  
His spirit lives with thine to-day.

Then brook, great Queen, thy people's glee ;

We cannot choose but let thee know

Our gladness in thy jubilee,

The joy that makes our hearts o'erflow ;

So once again this steadfast town

Doffs for a day its sober dress,

Unknits the firmness of its frown,

And revels wide in happiness.

So once again our paths are dense

With myriads of thy strong ones ; high

Throbs every pulse in rare suspense,

And eager looks of loyalty

Crowd every casement ; the gay streets,

With flag-festoons and streamers hung,

Laugh out, and every steeple greets

Its Sovereign with a rapturous tongue.

And now a happy murmur fills

The air, till brass and drums give out  
The nation's hymn ;—each bosom thrills

A moment ;—then one mighty shout  
Bursts from a thousand breasts, and drowns

The ponderous chords, and ever moves  
Beside thee as thou mov'st, and crowns

Thee Victress of thy people's loves.

Despise not our rough welcome ; we

Know little here of cultured calm ;  
But in our reverence for thee

To none will we forego the palm ;  
Ours is a hopeful discontent

That slumbers not while harm is wrought,  
A spirit stout and confident,  
And rugged ore of honest thought.



Here labour makes the daylight dark,

And while night's roof of lurid smoke

Reflects the leaping furnace—hark !

The giant hammer's thunder-stroke !—

Yet have we hearts as soft as strong,

Hands ever swift to succour need,

Blood that can boil at tale of wrong,

And heritage of manly deed.

Here dwelt the seer whose thoughtful eye

First clove in twain Air's subtle stream ;

Here mind's divine supremacy

Tamed to our use the monster Steam ;

And here Toil's nameless warriors give

Their lives to yield the world increase,

And patient armaments achieve

The bounteous victories of peace.

Then welcome, welcome ! for thy reign

Is rich with trophies, that shall last

When to a wiser world in vain

Destruction sounds her frantic blast ;

On lightning's wing our counsels flit,

The ocean shrinks, the hills depart,

The power most swift to slay hath knit

The nations into one great heart.

Now Knowledge sheds her quickening ray

In darkest haunts, and selfless Skill

Hath woven many a spell to stay

The progress of the powers of ill ;

Truth lifts her head, Oppression quails,

A purer air surrounds the throne ;

And slowly o'er the land prevails

The spirit of the Lord we own.

What though the shades of doubt affright,  
And God's new dayspring tarries long ;  
What though from dens of woe each night  
Ascends the cry of nameless wrong ;  
What though Want's ravening billow rolls  
Around the heedless isles of lust ;  
Never, to cope withal, were souls  
More earnest, tender, brave and just.

Then welcome ! for thou com'st to found  
A Hall of Right. May Justice flow  
Free through the realm, nor stagnate, bound  
In one choked well ; that men may know  
'Tis not for naught the sunlight dyes  
Our Hall with hues that speak thy fame,  
While round us, far and wide, arise  
Memorials of thy glorious name !

Glorious in queenhood, for above

The reach of malice shines thy power ;

Glorious in womanhood, for love

And noble sorrow are thy dower.—

Would that all English breasts, which swell

Like ours with joy of jubilee, .

Might mingle one full cheer, to tell

The faith and love they bear to thee !

May no presaging dread molest

The peace that broods around the shore

Of thy loved isle, though all the West

Be dark with clouds of threatening war ;

But may thy world-wide Empire, drawn

To one close brotherhood, sustain

The promise of a holier dawn,

The triumph of thy matchless reign !

## SPRING SONG

THE fragrance of awakening flowers

Quickens the breath of Spring ;

Exulting in their bridal bowers

The mated wood-birds sing ;

The lark is up ; the gentle air

Carols light music everywhere.

The bee sings at her lovely toil,

The cricket at his play ;

The redbreast scans the fresh-turned soil ;

The meadows, pied with May,

Shimmer beneath the trembling blue.—

Since all is song, I warble too.

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

CHEERLESS, through dens of want and death,  
Where unregarded woe blasphemes  
The Lord in whom we boast our faith,  
The Christmas dayspring gleams.

Friend of the poor ! that spak'st of one  
Beside whose gate a lazar lay,  
Dost mark the deeds of love undone  
Where Love is preached to-day ?

The man that leaves thy poor in hell,  
And saith to his fed heart, " Am I

My brother's keeper, so I dwell

In halls that hear no cry?"

The noisome tree, whereof the fruit

Is pomp and lust, which fills the air

With pestilence, and hath its root

In hunger and despair?

O Thou, whose smile the children knew!

Dost mark on yonder garret-bed,

Where weeps the rain the rafters through,

Three starvelings, and one dead?

And him who lolls in Pleasure's lap,

With dice and wine and paramour,

And tosses in a jockey's cap

The wages of the poor?

Avenging God ! who woke at length,  
A hundred years gone by, and gave  
For one tremendous hour the strength  
Of Samson to the slave ;

And made repent in tears and blood  
The harsh oppressors of the world—  
How long, ere yet of Brotherhood  
The banner be unfurled ?



## MORNING TWILIGHT

SADLY in the silent west,  
The moon, worn-out with watching all the night  
Over the sleeping earth, her cheek  
Hollow and white,  
Wan with a sorrow that she may not speak,  
Sinks to her lonely rest.

Like a love-deserted maid,  
That dare not meet her lord awake, but steals  
By night to his bedside, to mourn  
Her loss, and feels  
Him waking, in the sunlight of his scorn  
Triumphantly arrayed.

## THE SEMPSTRESS TO HER SKYLARK

POOR little captive !—never more

To seek the sunlight-hidden stars !—

I know what 'tis to break the heart,

Searching the sky through prison-bars.

“O for a breath of ocean-air !

O for a draught of morning dew

Fresh from the cowslip-cup, and bright

With heaven's all-embracing blue !

“O for the speedwell's azure smile !

O for the mountain's noonday sigh !

O for the clouds !”—and yet, dear lark,  
Thou canst not love them more than I.

—Now cease to chafe that ruffled breast ;  
For by my sorrow, pretty sweet,  
This very evening thou shalt rest  
Beneath the moonbeams and the wheat.—

Farewell—farewell !—O for a friend  
To do what I have done for thee !—  
But patience !—though men’s hearts are hard,  
God’s hand some day will set me free.

## SEMPER EADEM

THREE hundred years have passed since Spain  
O'ershadowed thought's new dawn with fear,  
And proudly forged a Titan's chain,  
And rattled it in Freedom's ear ;  
And dared upon the deep to flaunt  
The pomp of hate, the pride of creed,  
And vexed our waves with idle vaunt—  
Lo now !—her sceptre is a reed.

They lie where storm and sea go forth  
To wage o'erhead eternal fight,  
Where the foundations of the North  
Unshaken rest in voiceless night ;

The rust hath eaten bolt and brand,  
With weed the wrecks are mantled o'er,  
Those iron throats are choked with sand  
That roared against our native shore.

Yet not in Britain's golden days  
Were men united, save in deed ;  
For some deplored, with wistful gaze,  
The sunset of a parting creed,  
And some desired the dawn ; but all  
Uprose as one to face the foe,  
And girt them at their country's call,  
And laid the bold invader low.

Three hundred years have passed, and Spain  
Wears yet the shackles of the priest,  
And knout and famine goad in vain  
The sullen slave-hordes of the East ;

The nations yet grow great in guilt,  
Aspiring but to overwhelm,  
While restlessly, with hand on hilt,  
Suspicion scowls from realm to realm.

But who shall say old England grows  
Less hale, her sons of meaner mood ?  
Their life hath dyed the Russian snows,  
The desert sand hath drunk their blood ;  
Though valiant deeds no more are done  
With wings of white and oaken keel,  
Each stands as steadfast to his gun,  
And iron ribs hold hearts of steel.

We fear no stranger. Our worst foe  
Teems in our midst, where in grim street,  
Choked with Advancement's overflow,  
The eyes of Vice and Hunger meet ;

Where myriads draw their joyless breath

Only to sweat, and drink, and breed,

And haggard mothers drug to death

The babes their bosom fails to feed.

Yet while hearts hotly swell, when Wrong

Fastens upon his helpless prey,

And while eyes beam with light, that long

To tear the mask of Fraud away ;

While keen and watchful brains abide

To cast the Future's horoscope,

And generous heirs of ease and pride

Renounce their birthright—there is hope.

## THE DEAD CAPTAIN

FALLEN !—we shall not see his sword again  
Flash in the bitter conflict waged with wrong ;  
Nor hear his voice, amid the uncertain throng,  
Call to his rallying comrades, not in vain.  
The weakling lies not always with the slain,  
The triumph is not always to the strong.  
We question not the dark decree ; we trust  
'Twas well for him ; for us 'tis well ; the lust  
For power and fame, the weakness to be great,  
Are quelled with grief, and humbled to the dust,  
Where by the simple bed Death holds his state.



## WITH FLOWERS

IF these smile bright, believe they know

That beauty is a flower ;

If crushed and drooping, they confess

Thy smile's victorious power ;

If they look pale, it is because

They pined and paled for thee ;

And if they blush, believe their hearts

Are trembling consciously.

They wither, doomed through death alone

To greet a flower more fair ;

Yet, ere they perish, kiss them once,

'Twill raise thine image there ;

For often as thy fragrant breath  
Is mingling with their scents,  
There meet an angel and a flower,  
Thine own pure elements.

## A STORM SCENE

CRASH out, ye mighty chords !—The heavens are  
black

With wrath ; the lightnings shudder through the air,  
And blind with fury tear

The huddling rack,  
Furling its pale and tattered banners o'er

Yon steel expanse ;  
Tender as newborn love a rainbow glows, .

The warm mist 'neath it flushes moist and rose  
City and sea and shore

Steeped in one trance.

And every treetop sparkles with its leaves

Refulgent in the setting sun ;

The meads are golden-green, rich with the storm

Of Nature's summer-love ;

Far in the night above

A white bird twinkles like a star, and cleaves

The thunder-caverns dun ;

Denser and louder forth the sullen tempests swarm.

Crash out, vast symphony !—thy lover hears

And worships.—It is over—those fierce tears

Have blotted all to grey ;

With smothered moan

Great Nature's passion-music, like our own,

Is sobbed away.

## TO ONE IN SORROW

PATIENCE ! Time's gently-pressing palm  
Is on thy wound. Thou canst not feel  
The virtue of the looks that calm,  
The quiet of the hands that heal ;

Yet some glad morning thou shalt rise  
To taste again Joy's sweet surprise.

So from the day that saw it fade  
The plant takes heart. Thou canst not mark  
The hueless bud, the wrinkled blade,  
Forcing their prison cold and dark ;

Yet in some fostering, sunny hour  
Doth spring to life a newborn flower.

## TO SWEET SEVENTEEN

To thee, young queen, these tribute lines

Charged with my love—the word is writ ;

A daintier word were false ; but “love”

No more can tell the soul of it,

Than “light” can tell the myriad mood

Of sunshine ; from the fickle play

Which frolics through the dappled leaves

When all the lanes are white with May,

To that full bliss of warmth which lies

Delirious on the breast of June,

Or sunset flash of burdened heavens,  
Or dreamy glow of autumn noon.

So "love"—poor word—is all we have,  
To paint each radiant power that makes  
The sunshine of a human heart ;  
From the sweet sense of want which wakes

In childhood's breast, to ripe repose  
Of wedded faith, or ecstasy  
Of passionate youth, or such delight  
As that I take, fair girl, in thee.

## GRASS OF PARNASSUS

THERE is a flower, a milk-white star,  
That twinkles on the mountain-side,  
Up-glancing where its sisters are,  
Sightless beyond the blue noontide.

One simple leaf, an emerald heart,  
Closes around its slender stem ;—  
Not all the witchery of art  
Could fashion such a faultless gem.

Look on its snowy brow !—O see  
The tracery that veins its cheek !—



The faintly-flushed anemone

Is not more delicate and meek.

Yet where the unbridled tempest blows—

A sunbeam cradled in the storm—

It smiles in innocent repose,

A peaceful, pure and perfect form.

## AUTUMN SONG

THE year grows heavy ; but the hour  
Is fresh as April ; the blithe air  
Is tremulous with sun and shower ;

A rainbow smiles farewell  
To the spent storm, and everywhere  
Song breaks from hill and dell.

So when the summer of our life  
Fades into autumn, now and then  
An hour will come to us, sweet wife,  
When all our soul shall sing,  
And all our heart shall leap, as when  
We drank the dew of Spring.

## SERENADE

WHEN moonlight o'er thy casement weaves

Its network through the breathless leaves,

And lake and lawn beneath the summer sky

Dream in the mist—

Ah ! sweet ! a lovelier scene within doth lie

By slumber kist.

And when the stars begin to pale,

And trampling on her crimson veil

Young Morning flashes forth with dewy hair

And sparkling eyes—

Ah ! sweet ! I linger for a dawn more fair,

When thou shalt rise.

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